No 6

AN EXACT

# REPRESENTATION

OF THE

Very uncandid and extraordinary Conduct

OF

# *Dr. John Coakley Lettſom,*

AS WELL PREVIOUS TO, AS ON, THE DAY OF ELECTION FOR

## Phyſician to the Finſbury Diſpenſary.

WITH SOME

# REMARKS

On the Eſtabliſhment of the

# New Finſbury Diſpenſary.

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By THOMAS SKEETE, M. D.

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*Thou com'ſt in ſuch a* queſtionable *ſhape,*
*That I will ſpeak to thee.* SHAKESP. HAMLET.

*I cannot tell*
*What heav'n hath giv'n him, let ſome graver eye*
*Pierce into that: but I can ſee his pride*
*Peep through each part of him.* SHAKESP. HEN. VIII.

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LONDON:

Sold by J. FIELDING, Pater-noſter Row, and at the New Finſbury Diſpenſary, St. John's-ſtreet, Clerkenwell. 1786.

*** The Profits of this Pamphlet will be appropriated to the Service of the New Diſpenſary, St. John's-Street, Clerkenwell.

# INTRODUCTION.

AS it is ſeveral weeks ſince I declared my intention, at a public meeting of the Subſcribers of the Finſbury Diſpenſary, of making known the whole of the proceedings relative to the very extraordinary conduct of Dr. Lettſom, as well previous to, as on the day of election for a Phyſician to that Charity; and, as the perſons more particularly intereſted in the contents of this Pamphlet, are ſufficiently aware of the deſign of it, any explanation or preface on the ſubject may, perhaps, appear unneceſſary. I muſt requeſt, however, to be indulged with a few words.

Nothing can be more diſagreeable to my feelings than to appear before the public in a controverſy of this kind. I ſincerely regret the neceſſity of it, but I could not perſuade myſelf to permit a man in a public ſituation, and in the practice of a liberal profeſſion, to be guilty of the moſt unwarrantable duplicity and indelicacy of conduct, without expoſing it. It appeared ſo very inconſiſtent with the good order and government of the ſociety of Quakers, that any one of their body ſhould officiouſly intrude himſelf into the concerns of others, and, in order to render himſelf conſpicuous, encourage oppoſition and conteſt, under the pretences of charity and humanity, that I determined to repreſent the affair to the public, hoping that it may ſerve as a leſſon in future, and that others may experience a greater conſiſtency of conduct from Dr. Lettſom, than I have done.—I was thoroughly ſatisfied

tisfied that real charity does not exiſt in an oſtentatious diſplay of every guinea beſtowed; and, laſtly, I was willing to reprobate one, among the various contrivances or means by which an attempt is made to impreſs the public with an idea of ſelf-importance and conſequence, and from thence to acquire or preſerve popularity.

In all theſe reſpects, and in many others, how different is the conduct of Dr. Lettſom from that of the Phyſician, to whom *he wiſhes to be thought* the ſucceſſor, and whoſe memory is deſervedly eſteemed. His charity was of the moſt private kind, and the public did not become familiar with his name by means of the daily papers, or by his buſy interference in Diſpenſary elections.—But it would be foreign to the ſubject, and at any rate, perhaps, improper in this place to draw any further compariſon. I ſhall only obſerve, therefore, that an accurate ſtatement of facts, with the order in which they occurred, has been my principal object.—I leave it to the candid reader to determine the degree of credit which is due to them, and to form his own concluſions.

REPRE-

# REPRESENTATION

## OF

# Dr. Lettſom's Conduct, &c.

IN the beginning of Auguſt laſt I was informed by a friend that Dr. Rogers had expreſſed his intention of reſigning his office of Phyſician to the Finſbury Diſpenſary, and that a vacancy would ſoon be declared—I immediately reſolved to offer myſelf a Candidate to ſucceed him; and, as ſoon as I found, from different officers of the charity, that it might be done with propriety, I entered upon the canvaſs with earneſtneſs and activity. Finding that Dr. Lettſom was one of the Vice Preſidents; ſuſpecting that he was known to many of the ſubſcribers, and being aware of his deſire of rendering himſelf *conſpicuous on ſuch occaſions*, I made the earlieſt application to him for his vote and intereſt, to which I received the following reply: "That it was the firſt information he had received on the ſubject; that he

had a good opinion of me, and thought me a proper perſon for ſuch a ſituation; that he had every reaſon to think he ſhould vote for me, but would not abſolutely promiſe to do ſo; that he could foreſee no oppoſition; believed I ſhould have to go quietly over the ground, and had very little doubt of my ſucceſs. *With regard to his* INTEREST, *he expreſsly obſerved, that it was not his intention to exert it on ſuch an occaſion; for that on a former election he had reaſon to think the governors were diſpleaſed with the claim which he had made upon them, in conſequence of his having ſubſcribed largely to the charity, and that he had therefore determined in future not to interfere.*" In this way the interview might have ended, had I not ſuggeſted, upon his queſtioning me whether any one was likely to ſtart as my opponent, the probability of Dr. Meyer's becoming a Candidate. Of this Dr. Lettſom ſeemed doubtful, but added, that if he ſhould offer himſelf, being under a promiſe to him, he muſt give him his *vote* in preference to me. He did not, however, in the remoteſt manner poſſible, give me reaſon to ſuppoſe, that he would come forward actively in his behalf; indeed, ſuch a declaration would have been ſo totally incompatible with what he had juſt before aſſerted, that had it been made, I could not have failed immediately to have offered my remarks on ſo glaring an inconſiſtency. I reſted ſatisfied there-

fore,

fore, that although he might *vote* againſt me, it would only be the vote of one perſon; and pleaſed myſelf with having made ſome progreſs, by aſcertaining, that his *intereſt* at all events would not be exerted to my diſadvantage. So perfectly perſuaded was I of this, that being aſked on the two firſt days of my canvaſs by ſeveral of the ſubſcribers, whether I was *favoured by Dr. Lettſom*, I replied, that he had expreſſed his ſatisfaction at my offering myſelf a Candidate; and had given me ſome reaſon to expect his vote, if a gentleman to whom he had promiſed it did not appear; but that at any rate he had ſaid he *would not interfere in the election*, and conſequently that there was little to apprehend from any reſtraint that he might otherwiſe lay on thoſe with whom he was privately acquainted, or who would wiſh to be guided by his opinion. As a further proof of the ſame thing, I obſerved to them, that Dr. Lettſom had pointed out to me different perſons in the Charity to whom he adviſed me to apply as ſpeedily as poſſible, in order not only to ſecure their votes, but, from their reſpectability, to lay the foundation of many others that would naturally follow them. He particularly mentioned the Reverend Mr. Sellon and his family, whoſe intereſt I fortunately obtained at an early period, and which has proved highly beneficial to me.

Several other perſons were alſo named by him as proper objects of immediate application, but whom I do not now recollect. Theſe are circumſtances ſo ſtriking, that to any man of common ſenſe they muſt appear a ſtrong confirmation of my aſſertion, that he declared he would not interfere: how was it, indeed, poſſible to conceive, after ſuch profeſſions, that he could even have had a wiſh for the ſucceſs of another? for, had he intended to exert his intereſt for Dr. Meyer, or any other perſon, why ſhould he put me on a plan which would have a great tendency to defeat himſelf?

After this interview I requeſted a friend, who appeared to have ſome influence with Dr. Lettſom, to apply to him in my behalf for his vote; which gentleman the next day kindly informed me that he had ſeen him, and that he had given him reaſon to underſtand that Dr. Meyer *had refuſed being a Candidate*, but that, as he thought a *conteſt would prove beneficial to the charity*, he ſtill declined the poſitive promiſe of his vote. The next afternoon I received the following letter from Dr. Lettſom, incloſing another from Dr. Meyer to him.

" Dear Doctor,

" I mentioned, when I ſaw thee, that I " ſhould not oppoſe thy intereſt, provided Dr. " Meyer did not offer, to whom I had long

" promiſed

" promiſed my ſervices. This day, and not
" before, I received the incloſed, in which he
" calls upon me to fulfil my promiſes.

" I am, &c.

Auguſt 3d, 1786.

" J. C. LETTSOM."

With regard to Dr Meyer's letter, to which he refers, I immediately returned it without taking a copy; indeed, I thought it at the time an indelicate thing in Dr. Lettſom to ſend it to me. It was chiefly for the purpoſe of declaring his intention of becoming a candidate, claiming, in ſtrong terms, the promiſe of Dr. Lettſom's ſervices. This the Doctor conceived would be at leaſt ſome apology for the ſteps he was about to take; for he muſt have been conſcious that there would be an inconſiſtency in his conduct, and that I ſhould take notice of it. If he had really promiſed his ſervices to Dr. Meyer on any occaſion of this kind, which muſt have been the caſe from the claim which was made upon him, was it not natural that he ſhould apprize me of it fully when I firſt mentioned the vacancy to him? Unleſs he was very luke warm in his friendſhip, or his memory was uncommonly defective, how is it poſſible, under ſuch circumſtances, that Dr. Meyer could for a moment eſcape his recollection. If he was really in his remembrance at the time that he was flattering me with a proſpect

ſpect of ſucceſs, he was guilty of a moſt unwarrantable deception, becauſe he was encouraging me in the purſuit, merely with a view to a conteſt, in which he would at laſt have an opportunity of diſplaying a triumph. Why did he not, more eſpecially upon my mentioning Dr. Meyer's name, tell me openly, that he ſhould probably be induced, contrary to his inclination and former aſſertion, publicly to interfere in his behalf? No ſuch expreſſion eſcaped him; for I well recollect, that he only ſaid he ſhould in that caſe give him his *vote*. Why did he not, in the letter which I have inſerted, make ſome declaration of his intention to interfere publicly, inſtead of uſing the vague and artful term of *ſervices?* Could any one, at that time however, after his declaration not to interfere, put any other conſtruction on the word ſervices, than that of his making uſe of private recommendations to his particular friends? I muſt confeſs notwithſtanding, that I had my ſuſpicions. Several inſtances of Dr. Lettſom's inconſiſtency had been mentioned to me, and I therefore thought proper, in my anſwer to his letter, to remind him of the converſation which had ſo recently paſſed between us; from which I flattered myſelf, or had reaſon to hope, that he would not take an active part againſt me, though there was now no proſpect of my having his vote.

In

In a few days afterwards, I found that there was a public recommendatory-letter in circulation, of which the following is an exact copy.

" To the Governors of the Finſbury-Diſpenſary.

" AS I have been with your excellent Inſti-
" tution, from its Commencement and through-
" out its Progreſs, to the preſent Moment,
" endeavouring to promote its Succeſs, I can-
" not but feel a Solicitude in whatever may
" intereſt its future Proſperity.

" Impreſſed with a Senſe of the important
" Duties of a Phyſician, I recommend Dr. John
" Meyer, of Throgmorton-ſtreet: He is a
" Member of the Royal College of Phyſicians;
" and, were any other Recommendation of his
" Abilities neceſſary, my long perſonal Ac-
" quaintance with him entitles me to add,
" that his uncommon Erudition and his me-
" dical Knowledge equally render him quali-
" fied for that important Office.

" Sambrook-Court, Baſinghall-Street,
" Auguſt 4, 1786.
J. C. LETTSOM."

An application ſo very pointed, independent of Dr. Lettſom's declaration, that he would not interfere, could only have been juſtified, from him or any other individual, by a conviction that

that I was an improper perſon for the ſituation; but as he had previouſly ſaid, and has been ſince pleaſed to ſay, that he believed me fully qualified, it was conſequently improper, if not unjuſt; for if both the candidates, on an occaſion of this nature, were equal to the ſituation which they ſolicited, the Charity could not ſuffer in either caſe.—Hence, as far as its *proſperity* was concerned, for which Dr. Lettſom *expreſſes his ſolicitude*, it was a matter of indifference which of them ſhould prove ſucceſsful.

The appearance of this recommendatory letter, induced me to call upon its author, in order to make him acquainted with my ſentiments, and in particular to inform him, that I thought he had deceived me; that he had acted contrary to his declaration, and that, as I had given my friends, and ſeveral of the ſubſcribers to the Diſpenſary, reaſon to think that he was not to interfere; I conſidered myſelf called upon, both for their ſatisfaction, and in my own juſtification, publickly to declare his conduct, and more eſpecially, that if through his interference I ſhould loſe the election, I would then make known his want of candour in print. I meant at that time, merely in form of a ſhort Advertiſement, to have ſtated that my friends and myſelf had been put to a good deal of unneceſſary trouble, by the uncandid and inconſiſtent conduct of Dr. Lettſom. The circumſtances, however, which have ſince occurred,

are

are ſo numerous and ſtriking, and ſeveral of them have been ſo capitally diſplayed in public, that nothing ſhort of a Pamphlet could have conveyed an adequate idea of their *merit*, or have ſerved, in a ſufficient degree, to tranſmit them as a *brilliant example* to poſterity.—Let us then, in the firſt place, take a view of the reception with which I was honoured; for any interview from one ſo much occupied as the Doctor frequently *appears* to be, muſt, undoubtedly, be eſteemed an honour.

The threat, as he termed it, of making known his conduct, ſeemed at firſt to irritate him, and he haſtily inſinuated, that it would rather have the effect of increaſing, than of diminiſhing his exertions.—He obſerved, that it had been remarked by the late Dr. Fothergill, that he was pen-proof; ſaid, that he ſhould make no public reply; and added, that he had been pretty well accuſtomed to attacks of that nature; one of the laſt of which was very abuſive. To this I replied, that it was not my intention to deal in abuſe; that I meant to reſt the matter on ſimple facts, and more particularly on his declaration, that he would not interfere; which I repeated to him in his own words, urging the inconſiſtency of his conduct, and obſerving. that I thought it candid to ſtate to him, as early as poſſible, the ſteps which I had reſolved to take, in caſe I ſhould loſe the election.——He now became more cool, and, as

if ſenſible of the force of what I had alleged, attempted to juſtify himſelf by ſaying, that he had not thus publicly interfered till an old friend of Dr. Meyer had deſerted him, meaning a gentleman much reſpected in his profeſſion, who has always entertained a friendſhip for Dr. Meyer, as well as a high opinion of his abilities, but who having recommended me to ſuch of his friends as were ſubſcribers ſeveral days before he heard of Dr. Meyer's intentions, could not, although he regretted the conteſt, with propriety withdraw his aſſiſtance. At another inſtant Dr. Lettſom endeavoured to juſtify his conduct on the principle of a warmth of friendſhip for Dr. Meyer, and of his having formerly promiſed him his ſervices; but it is no difficult matter to account for his conduct on very different motives. We ſometimes meet with men extremely deſirous of conferring favours with a view of acquiring power and conſequence; and this principle of vanity is ſo great with ſome, that they are always ſeeking out for objects on whom they may beſtow their patronage. If not otherwiſe intereſted, they occaſionally prefer men who are reſpectable, and even ſuperior to themſelves in uſeful knowledge; but they do this not ſo much with the idea of rewarding merit and abilities, as with the expectation of increaſing their own importance, and this importance they conceive to be greater, in proportion to the difficulties which they overcome in effecting

their

their purpoſe. In this point of view I conſider Dr. Lettſom's late interference. An oppoſition, or conteſt, was neceſſary to complete his triumph, and this he effectually ſecured, by allowing me to make ſo great a progreſs before he exhibited himſelf, that I could not with propriety relinquiſh the purſuit. I am very ready to admit, that Dr. Meyer was intitled, in preference to me, to Dr. Lettſom's vote, and ſuch private ſervices as he could render him among his friends. So little acquainted was I, indeed, with Dr. Lettſom, that I had no claim upon him even for his vote; and, had he openly declared at the firſt interview that he ſhould uſe all his exertions for Dr. Meyer, it is impoſſible that I could have been diſpleaſed with him. It is highly probable that I ſhould have declined in that caſe offering myſelf a Candidate, as I have been always averſe to the fatigue and expence of a conteſted election.

But to proceed with the interview, at which a gentleman well acquainted with Dr. Lettſom, and friendly to me, was preſent. The diſpleaſure occaſioned by my declaration of making known his conduct appeared in a ſhort time to have totally ſubſided; and, whether with a view, at the inſtant of averting future inconvenience, or from a genuine *mildneſs* and *philanthropy of ſoul*, it may be difficult to determine, but the Doctor was pleaſed to ſay many civil things; paid me ſeveral compliments; offered to declare to the Committee of the Diſpenſary, that he

thought me fully capable of the ſituation; and, with a perſuaſive eloquence, *peculiar to himſelf*, wiſhed me to be ſatisfied with the idea of loſing the election; urging at the ſame time, with a GREATNESS of ſoul, his diſpoſition of ſerving me on any other occaſion. Such, in fact, was his intereſt, according to his own account, that there could be little doubt of my ſucceeding to the firſt vacant diſpenſary. As a word of comfort, he alſo hinted, that there were ſeveral diſpenſaries preferable to the *Finſbury*, though with only *one-half the ſalary*. I liſtened with attention, but expreſſed my determination of purſuing the preſent object. At the ſame time I could not help being ſurpriſed at the preſumption of an individual, however great his influence, in ſuppoſing that he could have the public ſo much at his command as only to ſpeak the word and be obeyed. He was further heard to ſay during the canvaſs, that he had nothing to allege againſt me in my profeſſion, but was diſpleaſed at my continuing to oppoſe his wiſhes at the Finſbury Diſpenſary, where he had always taken the *lead*; that if I would ſubmit for the preſent, he would make a point of bringing me in at one of the others. I have good reaſon, indeed, to believe, that the Doctor frequently ſpeaks of theſe inſtitutions as being totally ſubſervient to his wiſhes and commands. Dr. Lettſom, at length before the interview, ended, condeſcended more than once, placidly, to inquire, "what would ſatisfy me?"

I told

I told him that it was then too late to withdraw his letter, as it had circulated pretty generally, but that I thought I had a right to expect he would take no further ſteps againſt me, and that in particular, having been informed of his intentions of promoting a plan for the raiſing a large ſum of money to make new ſubſcribers, I truſted he would give up thoſe ideas, and ſubmit the event to the fair and regular choice of the old ſubſcribers.

He laughed at the idea of the large ſum of money; confeſſed that he had ſaid in a joking way to a friend of mine, that one thouſand pounds would be ſported, but that it was without meaning, and concluded with obſerving, that *there was then a paper on the table, to which he pointed*, ſubmitting to him a propoſal for making a number of new votes, but which could not be done without his aſſenting to ſomething which was required of him; *and this he had refuſed*; he added, that he had made no *perſonal applications*; had ſcarcely ſeen Dr. Meyer ſince the publication of the letter; and that, if he was *even diſpoſed to offer him the aſſiſtance of his purſe, he would not accept of it*. In ſhort, before we parted, the Doctor was ſo civil to me, that I flattered myſelf my interview had been productive of the deſired effect, and that he would not further interfere. The appearances were on the whole ſo favourable, and the gentleman who accompanied me was ſo much

much of that opinion, that I was induced to haſten to the different printers, in order to correct an expreſſion in one of my advertiſements, which was rather ſevere, and which, if it had been permitted to continue, might have proved an excuſe for the ſudden revolution of conduct which ſucceeded it. In a day or two afterwards I was juſtified in reſtoring that expreſſion, for ſuch was Dr. Lettſom's duplicity, that, notwithſtanding all his civility, his apparent indifference with regard to Dr. Meyer, and his queſtion, "What would ſatisfy me?" more than once repeated, he expreſſed himſelf much diſpleaſed, on the ſucceeding day, at my having threatened him, as he termed it, in his own houſe; ſaid, that he was determined, in conſequence of it, to take the moſt active part againſt me, and intreated ſeveral perſons to aſſiſt him in the effectual accompliſhment of his deſign.—Five hundred pounds at one time, a thouſand at another, and, laſtly, the ſum of three thouſand, were all ſpeedily boaſted as being in readineſs, if required.

So intent was Dr. Lettſom, at this period, upon the object; and, as it would ſeem, ſo determined to puniſh the offence, which upon *further reflection* he found I had committed, that he attended at the various committees for regulating Dr. Meyer's election. He was alſo heard frequently to ſay, during the canvaſs, that he would at all events make certain of the election,

election, however great the expence; and with that *modeſt forbearance*, which is his peculiar characteriſtic, exulted to ſome of the old Governors, who were *my friends*, in this commanding ſuperiority. Inſpired with the ideas of victory, he thought of little more than the field of battle, and occaſionally entertained his friends, I am told, by comparing his money to a numerous and well equipped regiment of ſoldiers, himſelf being the general. To what a pitch muſt his imagination have been heated, when he fancied himſelf ornamented in the martial dreſs, ready to take the field; *one ſpecies of vanity*, to which he had before been an entire ſtranger! To his great credit, however, be it ſpoken, his charity ſoon got the better of his heroiſm, and, conceiving it diſhonourable (no man being nicer in points of honour than the Doctor) to attack me with a body of troops, ſuperior in number and diſcipline to mine, thought it more equitable, conſidering my profeſſion, to exert his medical, rather than his martial ſkill. He therefore, it is ſaid, humorouſly compared his guineas to *golden pills*, 300 of which he preſcribed for me, as the firſt doſe on the day of election, *to be occaſionally repeated, till the effects were fully produced.* I am ſorry, in this way, to interrupt the principal circumſtances of my narration, but theſe remarks of the Doctor's, if they were really made by him, appear to conſtitute ſo good a ſpecimen of the ſlight ſmattering

tering of wit which forms a part of his character, that I could not, in juſtice to him, ſuppreſs them. Beſides, they may afford ſome little relief, previous to the attention, which will be required in the more ſerious relation of what is to follow.

Notwithſtanding the different reports of the large ſums of money to be employed againſt me, I perſevered in my applications to the different ſubſcribers, and ſtill flattered myſelf with ſome proſpect of ſucceſs, eſpecially as many of my friends, though they highly diſapproved of the principle which admitted it, had declared their intentions of becoming ſubſcribers, if neceſſary, on the day of election to ſerve me.

About a fortnight previous to the election, ſeveral perſons, who had a good opinion both of Dr. Meyer and myſelf, propoſed a plan, which they thought would not only prove beneficial to the inſtitution, but ſatisfactory to the candidates and their friends: this plan was, that an attempt ſhould be made, if the Governors at large acquieſced in the propriety of the meaſure, to elect both. The terms ſuggeſted were the following: That as the ſalary was far from being the principal inducement, it ſhould be divided between the two, and thus the expence of the charity remain as if one only were elected: that in conſequence of ſuch indulgence, the friends of the Candidates ſhould be anſwerable for three or four hundred new ſubſcribers, which would tend very much to the advance-

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ment of the inſtitution, and would effectually remove any objections on the part of thoſe Governors, who were deſirous of an acceſſion of money from the uſual courſe of the election. It was obſerved, that although ſome had flattered themſelves that 600 l. or 800 l. would be gained by the conteſt, yet, that 300 l. or 400 l. with the preſervation of harmony and unanimity, would be preferable; that the buſineſs would be better done, and would be much eaſier to the Phyſicians themſelves. For my own part, I readily approved of the idea, and it ſeemed agreeable to ſuch of my friends alſo as had an opportunity of hearing it. I was not a little ſurpriſed when I found, that upon its being ſtated to Dr. Lettſom, he had totally rejected it. Had it been carried into execution, the diſſenſions which have ſince taken place would have been avoided, and there would have been ſuch a co-operation of intereſts as might have proved highly conducive to the welfare and permanency of the inſtitution.

But this did not accord with the conſequence of Dr. Lettſom. Under ſuch circumſtances he would have gained no victory. He would not have appeared in the elevated ſituation of Vice-preſident at a conteſted election. He could not have exhibited his *bundle of bank-notes*, or his *banker's check-book*. He would have loſt his *lead* in the Diſpenſary. He therefore trampled on peace to gratify his vanity, and

from too great an anxiety and raſhneſs in extending his conqueſts, has probably laid the foundation of future diſobedience in all his *territories* *.

There were many of the ſubſcribers of the Finſbury Diſpenſary, indeed, who, on the firſt appearance of Dr. Lettſom's letter of recommendation, were ſufficiently aware of his motives; they declared, with an independency of ſpirit, worthy of imitation, that they would not permit him to dictate to them; and ſome, to whom he was quite unknown, conſidered it ſo great an inſult, that he ſhould preſume to nominate their Phyſician, that although otherwiſe diſpoſed to ſerve Dr. Meyer, they determined on this account to oppoſe him.

The eyes of all, it is to be hoped, will now be ſo far opened, that in every future election they will exerciſe their own judgment, and not ſubmiſſively bend to the inclinations of an *individual*; for if his numerous contributions to the Diſpenſaries be really connected with charitable motives, he ought, in ſtrict propriety, to be more cautious in preſuming upon them, and ſhould by no means expect a return by having the office of Phyſician or Surgeon *at his diſpoſal.*

When money is *publickly laviſhed, by a man in a profeſſional ſituation*, his motives are always to be ſuſpected. Real charity and benevolence

* By the Doctor's territories I mean the various diſpenſaries at which he has exhibited himſelf in the election of officers, &c.

demand

demand no other return than the ſatisfaction of the inward man. They are always ſilent, and delight not in *the parade of patronage*. *Their delicacy* is ſhocked by the applauſe of the multitude, and *their very exiſtence* totally extinguiſhed by the *puffs* of a News-paper.

Theſe reflections naturally lead to a conſideration of Dr. Lettſom's conduct on the DAY OF ELECTION, which will form the moſt intereſting part of this little narrative. Moſt of the facts hitherto mentioned reſt on the authority of individuals. They can only derive weight, or have their due influence, in proportion to the credit which different perſons may be diſpoſed to annex to the repreſentations of myſelf, and a few others. It is poſſible, therefore, that aſſertions may be made with a view either to diſprove them, or weaken their force.—But it is very different with the ſcene which will now open. This was a public exhibition. It excited an attention from its novelty, which only ſerved to heighten the diſguſt, occaſioned by the repreſentation, and rendered the impreſſion ſo forcible, that it can never be totally obliterated. Never before did an individual exhibit himſelf in ſuch a variety of characters, obviouſly incompatible with each other.

Dr. Lettſom, by his avowed oppoſition to me, and by his declaration to different perſons, that he was determined, by the force of

money, to carry his point, was highly improper for any ſituation in which impartiality and ſtrict juſtice, with regard to me, were required. He notwithſtanding exhibited himſelf in the character of *judge*, by filling the chair at the election; a meaſure ſo very unprecedented, and ſhockingly indelicate, that moſt of thoſe who were preſent expreſſed their ſurpriſe, and many immediately reſolved carefully to watch his proceedings. Never did the Doctor, in his exertions for popularity, ſo ſtrangely miſtake his ground! The parties concerned are invariably excluded, if not by their own feelings, by the ſuggeſtions of others, from all ſituations in which an impartial deciſion is required; and where could ſuch a deciſion be more neceſſary than from the chairman or preſident of a conteſted election? It ſeemed ſtrange, therefore, that Dr. Lettſom, although a Vice Preſident, ſhould be permitted to take the chair, when the Treaſurer of the Diſpenſary, and various others, not only of character, but of moderate ſentiments, were preſent.—A few perſons, indeed, conceived that he meant by his *moderation* and *impartiality* to atone for his former conduct; but we ſhall ſoon find to what an extraordinary pitch he aggravated it. Behold him then ſeated in the chair, in the preſence of a reſpectable number of the ſubſcribers to the Diſpenſary, with his ſon, a boy, apparently of twelve or thirteen, at his

his elbow, *(excellent leſſon of humility!)* ready to aſſiſt him in the ſkilful management of the means, by which he was to obtain ſucceſs.

It was not ſufficient for Dr. Lettſom that he ſhould be a *witneſs* to the overthrow: he was determined to be the *principal agent*, by which he unfortunately degraded himſelf from the character of Judge, to one little ſhort of that of Executioner; for without the ſlighteſt civility or reſpect to the numerous ſubſcribers who were waiting to give their votes, and ſeveral of whom were immediately obliged to go into the country, or were called away by particular buſineſs: I ſay, without regarding theſe, totally unmindful of decency and good order, and in direct violation of the rules preſcribed on ſuch occaſions, he ſpeedily occupied the balloting glaſs, and, with an inconceivable dexterity, proceeded to call over a liſt of *proxies*, for each of which he gave a vote; but which proxies had neither been paid for, nor the receipt for the money, according to the uſual cuſtom, produced.

The *impartial* Preſident little ſuſpected that this *equitable method* of proceeding would have been called in queſtion. It was enough for him that a guinea ſhould afterwards be paid for each of the names at his leiſure; but however convenient or ingenious his plan might have proved, it was ſo unprecedented, that ſeveral perſons objected to it, and inſiſted that a receipt ſhould be produced with each of the new proxies, before

before any of them could be conſidered as votes. The ſimple form of objection, or diſapprobation, was inadequate however, to the effect. An act of violence only could reſtore things to their proper channel. A gentleman, whoſe conduct was highly applauded on that occaſion, was in fact only able to intercept the communication between the Preſident's *hand* and *the glaſs*, by forcibly placing his hat over the latter. The Doctor, provoked at any meaſure which ſeemed levelled at the *dignity of his purſe*, gave ſtrong indications of paſſion and diſpleaſure; and drawing from his ſide-pocket a bundle of Bank-notes, to the amount, it is believed, of 2000*l.* *daſhed them on the table*, in the moſt inſulting manner, obſerving, that if they ſhould not prove ſufficient, his *Banker's Check-book* was ready to ſupply the deficiency *. He haughtily

* Some of my readers may be anxious to know what portion of the 2000*l.* was *charitably* depoſited by the Doctor in the fund of the Diſpenſary. From the opening to the cloſe of the ballot, independent of thoſe who had ſubſcribed from time to time from the declaration of the vacancy, more than 500 guineas were received for votes, in favour of Dr. Meyer, the greateſt part of which, it may be at firſt ſuppoſed, from the *grand exhibition* by Dr. Lettſom, was furniſhed by him. It is believed, however, that the part which he contributed was exceedingly trifling, (I underſtand not above a few pounds,) and that Dr. Meyer was himſelf at no ſmall expence; for which I am ſorry, and ſhould have been happy if any explanation on my part, or that of my friends, could have been made with propriety, ſo as to have prevented it.

called

called upon the ſpectators to remember that he, with a few others, had founded the inſtitution, and wiſhed they would be unanimous in one cauſe, which he called the *cauſe of charity*. This would not ſatisfy them. They thought themſelves called upon to revenge ſo great an inſult, and the whole became a ſcene of uproar and confuſion: ſome of the friends even of Dr. Meyer, joined in the cry of *ſhame*.—The tumult, however, at length ſubſided, without any of thoſe raſh acts of perſonal violence, which are liable to occur on ſuch occaſions, but which are always beſt avoided.

The *perſevering* Doctor, regardleſs of theſe public marks of cenſure and contempt, and loſing ſight of every thing but the *prize in view*, ſeemed rooted to the ſpot, and continued in his *dignified ſituation*. What an admirable diſplay of fortitude!—Where ſhall we find the man who would have maintained his ground ſo *nobly?*

My readers may eaſily anticipate the event of the election. To be brief, the *charitable* Doctor, however much he might loſe *himſelf*, gained *his point*, and happily, without the aſſiſtance of his Banker's Check-book; for my friends, at the ſight of the 2000 l. although convinced that the Doctor produced it more *in terrorem*, than with any idea of bringing it into real uſe; yet being ſufficiently aware, that inſtigated by pride, he would have exhauſted his whole

whole fund rather than have been defeated in his end, thought it much better to *oblige him at an eaſy rate*, than by imprudently laviſhing the little ſtock they had in hand, make his triumph ſtill greater.

In fine, my friends and myſelf were not in the leaſt ſurpriſed to find, at the cloſe of the ballot, that there appeared for Dr. Meyer 885 votes—for myſelf 310, of which 294 were old ſubſcribers, 20 new ones only having been made in my favour, and four of theſe, through accident, not having voted.

So fully ſatisfied were we with our conduct, and with the conviction that the majority of old ſubſcribers was in my favour*, that never, perhaps, was the loſs of an election leſs felt by the unſucceſsful candidate or his friends.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Lettſom, conſcious of the ſtriking impropriety of his conduct in his capacity of chairman, attempted to apologize, and expreſſed a wiſh that the whole of the buſineſs ſhould be forgotten.—Being aware, however, that the affair would be publicly talked of; although I was ſatisfied of the approbation of my more intimate friends, yet conceiving that thoſe leſs acquainted with me would be backward in believing that any man,

* By examining the books of the Secretary, in which the names of the *old Governors*, who voted, were marked, they were found to amount to 526, 294 of which having been in my favour, gave me a majority of 62.

after

after the profeſſions which he had made to me, could be capable of ſuch a conduct, I made known my reſolution, that the various circumſtances relating to the election ſhould not be paſſed over in ſilence, but that I would make the whole of them public in print.—One of my friends immediately requeſted that Dr. Lettſom would inform the meeting, whether he had not ſaid to me, that he would not publickly interfere, as he had formerly diſpleaſed the Governors by doing ſo? Upon his remaining ſilent, I related the different proceedings in as few words as poſſible, in order to give him an opportunity, before he quitted the chair, of defending himſelf.

He neither denied nor explained the charges of duplicity, which I alleged againſt him, although an anſwer to them was repeatedly called for, and had the *ſatisfaction* at length of leaving the room, amidſt the murmurs and moſt ſtriking marks of cenſure and diſapprobation of many that were preſent.——

Such has been the conduct of Dr. Lettſom; in the repreſentation of which, I can ſafely declare, that there has been no exaggeration, nor wilful intention of exceeding the bounds of ſtrict truth and propriety. Having throughout the whole been ſo much on my guard, as to take down in writing, an accurate account of moſt of the circumſtances, immediately after the time that

 they

they occurred, I can aſſert them with greater confidence than if I had truſted to memory. Relying on the juſtice of my cauſe, I ſhall cheerfully ſubmit it to every candid and unprejudiced mind; and ſhould Dr. Lettſom condeſcend to offer any thing to the public in his juſtification, ſhall be ready, if neceſſary, to enter into any further diſcuſſion or explanation of the ſubject.

# REMARKS

ON THE

# ESTABLISHMENT

OF THE

# *New Finſbury Diſpenſary,*

IN

## Saint John-ſtreet, Clerkenwell.

THE eyes of the ſubſcribers of the Finſbury Diſpenſary having been fully opened by the very glaring abuſe to which moſt inſtitutions of this nature are liable in the election of officers, evinced by the recent example which has been mentioned, a ſelect number of them, aſſiſted by ſome other gentlemen of reſpectable character, immediately reſolved to inſtitute a New Diſpenſary, with ſuch laws and regulations as would effectually remove all the evils complained of. A plan of this kind has accordingly been carried into execution, and the Diſpenſary already opened for the relief of the poor. The encouragement which it has met with has been ſo great as to ſurpaſs the moſt ſanguine expectations of its firſt promoters, and, if a judgment may be formed from the perſeverance, abilities, and connexions of many of the gentlemen who have intereſted themſelves in its

ſucceſs, there can be little doubt of its being flouriſhing and permanent.

It was propoſed, and, indeed, intended, at one time, to fix it either in Holborn or Hatton-ſtreet, but it appeared on conſideration more eligible to adopt a ſituation as near the center as poſſible of the different diſtricts, at which patients are to be viſited at their own habitations; and, as Iſlington and Holborn conſtituted the two extremes, it was thought that St. John's-ſtreet, Clerkenwell, would be the moſt convenient place; which has therefore been preferred. The title of the *New Finſbury Diſpenſary*, and its vicinity to the Finſbury Diſpenſary in Saint John's-ſquare, have induced ſome of the gentlemen connected with the latter to ſuppoſe, that the new one has been inſtituted in direct oppoſition to the other, and with the expectation of its complete ruin. Such ſuſpicions, I may venture to aſſert, are without foundation; for, although the firſt idea of the new eſtabliſhment originated from the diſguſt at the conduct of Dr. Lettſom, and, although ſome of the ſubſcribers of the old one have determined in future totally to ſupport the new, which muſt at preſent, in ſome degree, weaken the reſources of the former, and thus far imply an oppoſition, yet, there are others among the moſt zealous ſupporters of the new plan, who ſtill mean to contribute to the old one, from the conviction, that the number of diſtreſſed objects is ſo great as to

furniſh

furniſh employment, and full encouragement, for both. This will be more generally the caſe, ſhould the old Diſpenſary follow the example ſet by the new one, of correcting the abuſes before ſtated, in the election of officers, and in *guarding againſt the undue influence of individuals.*

As there are ſeveral of the ſubſcribers to the old Diſpenſary, who, from the offices which they hold in it, and from other circumſtances, muſt be much intereſted in its welfare, and to whom I feel myſelf particularly indebted for their friendly conduct, it gives me ſome concern that the new one, to which I have been appointed Phyſician, ſhould excite ſo great an alarm among them, and that they ſhould, in the letter to their ſubſcribers, which has been haſtily circulated, endeavour to impreſs them with the idea of a direct oppoſition, and of the moſt hoſtile meaſures. I muſt again declare, that the promoters of the New Inſtitution are actuated by honourable and benevolent motives. They admit that the two Diſpenſaries may be ſo far conſidered in oppoſition, that the one, which is the moſt perfect, or beſt regulated, will, in all probability, be moſt generally preferred; but that, as the one will always have the opportunity of adopting any ſalutary regulation made by the other, a balance may be eaſily preſerved, while the management is entruſted with proper perſons. They are willing to allow, that they expect ſuperior advantages from their new laws,

eſpecially

eſpecially if theſe are not adopted by the other; but they never intend to encourage any unfair or improper method of injuring the Old Diſpenary; and are very far from ſuppoſing, that the ruin of it is neceſſary to the eſtabliſhment and ſucceſs of their own. This Inſtitution, from the uncommon ſupport which it has already met with, they believe will be flouriſhing, whatever may be the condition of the other; nay, if it ſhould even be more liberally ſupported than before.

Whatever may be the event, there is one conſideration, which muſt be ſatisfactory to all, that the poor, the object of both Inſtitutions, cannot poſſibly be injured by the additional eſtabliſhment; for, if one only ſhould maintain its ground, they will ſtill derive the ſame advantages as before; if both ſhould ſucceed, the relief which they will experience muſt, of courſe, be more complete and extenſive.

It would be no difficult matter to prove, that the greateſt utility may ariſe from two Diſpenſaries in the ſame neighbourhood, provided it be populous, and that the number of labouring and indigent perſons be great, which is certainly the caſe in the diſtricts included by the two Diſpenſaries in queſtion.

The perſons who are chiefly entruſted with the management of the buſineſs will be thus rendered more vigilant; œconomy will be more cautiouſly ſtudied; abuſes will be no ſooner committed than corrected, and the medical attendants

dants will be more active in the diſcharge of their duty. The torpor or lethargy, which is ſo frequently connected with the idea of ſecurity, and which is often productive of ruin, will be effectually obviated; and, if a propriety and moderation of conduct be preſerved, the two Diſpenſaries may in time be mutually ſerviceable to each other. Inſtead therefore of any diſlike or averſion to the new Inſtitution, the friends of the old one ſhould rather promote its intereſts, as their donations and ſubſcriptions will be more cautiouſly and uſefully applied than formerly; and, although there may be ſome degree of competition, yet, as we ſhall co-operate in a ſimilar deſign, the good effects of which will be ſenſibly felt by the poor, it is to be hoped, that thoſe ſentiments of oppoſition, which have been ſo ſtrongly inculcated, will be diminiſhed or removed. It ſhould be recollected alſo, that part of the reſources of the new Diſpenſary will be derived from perſons who, although charitably diſpoſed, yet, from the diſtance at which they reſide, would never probably have contributed to the old one, which is one reaſon, among many others, to prove that both Inſtitutions may be well ſupported.

The promoters of Diſpenſaries in general contend, that they cannot exiſt without the money ariſing from the new ſubſcribers, who are permitted to vote at the different elections. The friends of the New Finſbury Diſpenſary are of a contrary opinion. They wiſh to preſerve

ſerve *inviolable the right of election*, a principle which ſo ſtrongly accords with the feelings of moſt men, that they have no doubt they will experience the moſt liberal and ſubſtantial ſupport.

I cannot conclude this ſubject without expreſſing my warmeſt acknowledgments to the numerous friends, who have either already ſubſcribed, or mean to contribute to the New Diſpenſary. As I am much intereſted in its proſperity, they cannot more effectually ſerve me than by continuing their exertions in adding to the number of ſubſcribers.

Such perſons as humanely devote a certain portion of their fortune to charitable purpoſes, may, *at whatever diſtance*, contribute with propriety to the preſent undertaking; for, as by the laws of the Diſpenſary, patients, wherever they reſide, may, by a proper attendance, experience relief; and, as the moſt diſtant ſubſcribers may appoint any friend to recommend diſtreſſed objects, they will have the ſatisfaction of reflecting, that their donations are as well diſpoſed of as if they themſelves were on the ſpot. My friends therefore, however diſtantly ſituated, may have an opportunity both of ſerving me, and of gratifying their humane diſpoſitions, by aſſiſting in the promotion of this uſeful Inſtitution.

THE END.

No 7

# OBSERVATIONS

ON A

# PROPOSAL

For eſtabliſhing at EDINBURGH

# A PUBLIC DISPENSARY

For the relief of the POOR, when ſubjected to chronical or tedious diſeaſes.

By ANDREW DUNCAN, M. D.
Phyſician in EDINBURGH.

EDINBURGH:

M,DCC,LXXVII.

# PREFACE.

THE following Obſervations may probably fall into the hands of ſome readers who have never ſeen the Propoſal to which they allude. On their account, the Propoſal itſelf is here reprinted. And, that every reader may be better able to judge for himſelf how far the objections which have been urged againſt it are well founded, theſe alſo are again ſubjected to public examination.

It may readily be preſumed, that there are ſome to whom the anſwers here given to theſe objections will appear unſatisfactory. Yet it is concluded, that there is no one who will be averſe to receive that evidence which future facts can alone afford. By theſe, it is hoped, he will be fully ſatisfied, whether his own private opinion be well

well founded, or the contrary. And, in forming a determination reſpecting a propoſal, which has for its object the relief of thoſe oppreſſed by indigence and diſeaſe, the generous and humane muſt derive pleaſure and ſatisfaction from lending their aid in furniſhing to the public that ſolid and incontrovertible proof, which can be derived only from experience.

Edin. June 20.
1777.

*A Propoſal for eſtabliſhing at Edinburgh a Public Diſpenſary for the relief of the Poor, when ſubjected to Chronical or Tedious Diſeaſes.*

THERE are many individuals whoſe labour, even in health, cannot raiſe them above penury and want. It is, therefore, preſumed, that no one will deny the utility of thoſe charities which are intended for their aid in time of ſickneſs. And, among the many bleſſings which attend eaſy and affluent circumſtances, the ſatisfaction which is derived from affording relief to thoſe who are real objects of charity, is certainly not the leaſt conſiderable. Hence, it is not doubted, that the following propoſal will meet with candid and ſerious conſideration from the benevolent and humane.

In many diſeaſes, relief can only be afforded to the poor, by removing them from the ſituation in which they may happen to be placed, to one better accommodated for their recovery. But there are other ailments, in which the cure might be conducted with equal advantage, while they continue to lodge in their own habitations, and, in ſome meaſure, to proſecute their uſual employments. For the removal of complaints

of

of this kind, it is principally requiſite that they be directed to the uſe of proper medicines, and that they be furniſhed with theſe, without incurring an expence which they are unable to defray. Beſides this, patients labouring under particular diſeaſes, and at certain periods of life, eſpecially infancy, may have their complaints alleviated by medical aid, although they would be much injured by being lodged in an hoſpital.

From ſuch conſiderations, although there be not, perhaps, a metropolis in Europe better ſupplied with public hoſpitals for the reception of the ſick, than London, an inſtitution for furniſhing the indigent with medicines and advice in ſickneſs, has lately been eſtabliſhed at that place. The General Diſpenſary of London, which is ſupported by no other fund but voluntary annual contributions from the charitable, has been the means of relieving thouſands from wretchedneſs and miſery. And, it affords a convincing proof of the utility of the inſtitution, that the number of contributors has been conſiderably augmented every year, ſince the commencement of that charity.

That an eſtabliſhment of this nature at Edinburgh, would be attended with ſimilar advantage, it is at leaſt highly probable. If, therefore, it can be ſhown, that theſe advantages may be

be obtained at a very inconſiderable expence, there is ſome reaſon to hope, that the generoſity of the public may grant the neceſſary aid. Little elſe would probably be requiſite for carrying this ſcheme into execution at Edinburgh, than the providing a houſe, with proper conveniences for the purpoſes intended. And theſe would require neither a large nor expenſive building.

An annual fund, ſufficient to render this charity extenſively uſeful, might, it is preſumed, be obtained, by conjoining with the practice in medicine which it would afford, lectures on the caſes of the patients who reap the benefit of it. Beſides a gratuity to the lecturer, a ſmall fee, in name of medicine-money, would be chearfully paid by every ſtudent attending the lectures. That, in this way, money may be collected at Edinburgh, appears from a trial already made. For, at the commencement of this winter ſeſſion, Dr Duncan began a courſe of Clinical Lectures in the manner here propoſed, and he collected, as medicine-money, above fifty guineas. Although this ſum would not go far in the maintenance of patients, and in every other expence connected with it; yet, when ſolely appropriated to the purchaſe of medicines, and when theſe, although of the beſt quality, are procured in the moſt oeconomical manner, it may be extenſively uſeful.

uſeful. And, accordingly, from this fund, many indigent perſons, afflicted with chronical diſeaſes, improper for admiſſion into an hoſpital, are every week ſupplied with medicines. That there are not only many proper objects for ſuch a charity, but that they begin to be ſenſible of the advantages of it, may be inferred, at leaſt with ſome degree of probability, from obſerving, that the number of the patients applying for relief has increaſed every week ſince the commencement of this ſcheme.

From theſe conſiderations, Dr Duncan, who would probably carry on a private Diſpenſary, in the manner in which he has already begun it, is induced to lay the preſent propoſal before the public, in hopes that a charity which, in his opinion, cannot poſſibly be attended with any bad conſequences, may be put upon a permanent footing. Although the regulations by which this charity ſhould be conducted, behoved afterwards to be ſettled by the contributors, yet the following conditions, moſt of which are copied from thoſe of the London Diſpenſary, might be the baſis of theſe regulations.

*Firſt*, That every one contributing to the undertaking, ſhall hold the rank of Governor, during the ſpace of two years, for each guinea he ſhall pay to the funds of the charity.

*Second*,

*Second*, That every one contributing five guineas at the commencement of the ſcheme, or ſeven guineas at any different periods during the firſt five years, ſhall be a governor for life.

*Third*, That a general meeting of the Governors ſhall be held annually, at which they ſhall elect a Preſident, two Vice-preſidents, a Treaſurer, a Secretary, and ſix Directors, for ſuperintending the buſineſs of the charity during the enſuing year.

*Fourth*, That, at this annual meeting, a particular account ſhall be laid before the Governors of the money collected and expended during the preceeding year, and of the number of patients who have obtained aſſiſtance from the charity.

*Fifth*, That all future appointments of phyſicians, or other medical officers, ſhall be by the ſuffrages of a majority of the Governors.

*Sixth*, That, as far as the funds of the charity will allow of it, every Governor ſhall be entitled to have conſtantly one patient enjoying the benefit of the charity on his recommendation.

It is impoſſible to foretell every conſequence that may reſult from ſuch a ſcheme. Experience, and that too for ſome length of time, is the only ground on which a certain concluſion can be formed reſpecting the advantages or diſ-

advantages of any new inſtitution. Yet it is preſumed, with ſome degree of confidence, that, if the plan now propoſed ſhall ever be properly carried into execution, every contributor will have the moſt convincing evidence that it is a charity of great utility; and, among other beneficial conſequences, the following will probably reſult from it:

It will afford relief to many of the induſtrious poor, when afflicted with tedious ailments, of ſuch a nature as to render them improper objects for admiſſion into an hoſpital. And, for ſupplying their neceſſities, it may raiſe a new fund to ſuch an extent, at leaſt, as to be of no inconſiderable uſe.

It may diminiſh the number of urgent applications for admiſſion into the Royal Infirmary, from thoſe labouring under chronical diſeaſes, not ſufficient to incapacitate them from continuing, in ſome degree, their uſual employments, and not requiring a ſtate of reſt, but of action. Thus it may be the means of occaſioning a ſaving of the funds of a moſt excellent charity, the annual expence of ſupporting which has been, of late years, from the increaſing number of applications, equal to the amount of its annual revenue.

It may relieve the phyſicians of the Infirmary from an uneaſineſs which they muſt ſometimes feel,

feel, in conſequence of the urgent applications of thoſe who are improper objects for admiſſion into an hoſpital; for whoſe aid no particular fund is yet provided; and the ſupplying of whoſe neceſſities would be an additional expence to the hoſpital.

As the caſes of different patients can never be ſuppoſed to agree with each other in every circumſtance, Clinical Lectures afford an almoſt endleſs variety. And, it is probable, that the more they are given, the more will they be valued. The preſent inſtitution then, by ſtill farther demonſtrating, to thoſe who ſtudy medicine at Edinburgh, the propriety of attending theſe lectures as long as they remain there, may be inſtrumental in increaſing the number of ſtudents who attend the Infirmary, where they will hear clinical lectures on acute diſeaſes; and thus, while, in one way, it diminiſhes the expence, in another, it may add to the revenue of that uſeful charity.

It will furniſh thoſe gentlemen who reſort to Edinburgh for the ſtudy of medicine with opportunities of hearing important, yet doubtful queſtions, reſpecting the fundamental principles of the healing art, ſtated in different points of view. A circumſtance which, as tending to ſecure diligence among public profeſſors, and to promote liberal inquiry among ſtudents, has led

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the founders and patrons of foreign univerſities to give encouragement and ſupport to private teachers in medicine. This is particularly the caſe at Vienna, the ſeat of an univerſity, on which, as a ſeminary of medical education, greater attention has of late years been beſtowed, than on any other in Europe, and which is at preſent in the moſt flouriſhing ſituation.

It will give every Governor an opportunity of relieving, at a very inconſiderable expence to himſelf, thoſe whom he may accidentally learn to be in neceſſitous and diſtreſsful circumſtances; and who require that charitable aid, which is, of all others, moſt eſſential, the means of reſtoring health.

And, *finally*, If the appointment of different medical officers to this charity ſhall be thought neceſſary, either now, or at any after period, or if it ſhall, at any time, be deprived of a Phyſician by death, reſignation, or otherwiſe, the eſtabliſhment of the charity now propoſed will put it in the power of a majority of the Governors to reward approved merit, by giving it the means of acting, or to furniſh riſing genius with an opportunity of diſplaying itſelf.

How far theſe ſentiments are well founded, time alone can determine. But, if ſome of the good conſequences here pointed out ſhould not reſult from it, others may ariſe no leſs beneficial,

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as tending to relieve the diſtreſs of the wretched, and to advance the ſtudy of medicine at Edinburgh. Although it may be of material conſequence to this undertaking, that thoſe who think it not unworthy of their countenance, ſhould take an early opportunity of ſubſcribing; yet no money will be expected from any one till a general meeting of the Governors ſhall have elected a treaſurer for receiving the money, and directors for the adminiſtration of it. Under the conduct of a council, choſen by the free ſuffrages of the charitable and humane, it will not readily be imagined that any object will be allowed to interfere with public utility; and, if the intereſt of any individual ſhould ſeem to be promoted by a meaſure which tends to the good of the community, it will not be diſpleaſing to any generous or liberal mind.

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*A Letter from Dr Duncan to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary.*

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE lately ſubjected to the examination of ſome of my friends, a propoſal for eſtabliſhing a public Diſpenſary at Edinburgh. From converſations which I have had with ſome of your number, I am ſorry to learn, that they cannot

not be brought to view this matter in the ſame light that I do. Thoſe whoſe intentions are even the beſt, will yet think differently of the ſame ſubject; and it is by the teſt of experience alone, that it can finally be known who is in the right.

I truſt that it will be a ſufficient defence of my conduct, that I am as much convinced as I poſſibly can be, by reaſoning conjoined with ſome experience, that the ſcheme which I have projected, if it ſhall ever have a fair trial, will be productive of very conſiderable advantage to the Royal Infirmary. And if, from farther experience, it ſhall be found to have a contrary effect, I am, for my own part, determined to drop it. Where my judgment, however, is not convinced by the reaſoning of others, I cannot, I imagine, be blamed for appealing to fact, and future trials.

I have long entertained the higheſt regard for that valuable inſtitution, of which you have the honour to be the managers; and, oftner than once, I have employed in its ſervice the moſt ſtrenuous exertions of which I was capable. Should theſe exertions be ever again requiſite, they ſhall not be wanting: And, as I am convinced, that Clinical Lectures, during the ſummer, which I carried on for the two laſt ſeaſons, might be continued with ſome advantage to the Hoſpital,

hoſpital, if no other perſon, who may conſider himſelf as having a preferable claim to that employment, or whoſe labours have a greater chance of being crowned with ſucceſs, be willing to undertake the office, you may command the ſervices of

Your moſt humble

*Briſto-Street*, and moſt obedient ſervant,

19*th March*. ANDREW DUNCAN.

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*Minute of a Meeting of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, 20th March* 1777.

THE Managers of the Royal Infirmary having obſerved, that a printed paper has been lately diſperſed in this city, containing, *A Propoſal for eſtabliſhing at Edinburgh a Public Diſpenſary, for the relief of the Poor when ſubjected to chronical or tedious diſeaſes;* and being perſuaded, that the carrying this ſcheme into execution would be of detriment to the charitable foundation under their charge, they conſider it as their duty to lay their ſentiments, with reſpect to this propoſal, before the public. And,

1*ſt*, The Managers are of opinion, that the propoſed inſtitution is in a great meaſure ſuperfluous. Though the Managers of the Infirmary, from

from the ſtate of their funds, are under the neceſſity of limiting the number of patients to be admitted at one time into the hoſpital; yet, as they are conſtantly attentive to accommodate the public, they allow a diſcretionary power to the phyſicians and ſurgeons in waiting, to receive ſupernumeraries, ſo that no urgent caſe may be refuſed admittance; and, relying on the beneficence of the public, they have ventured ſometimes to exceed their annual income, in order to afford relief to the diſtreſſed poor: And, ſuppoſing that the eſtabliſhment of the houſe were at any time full, yet charitable perſons may obtain a place for a patient at the ſmall expence of paying ſixpence each night, until a vacancy ſhall happen, which will permit the hoſpital to ſupport him on its own funds.

Beſides this, the ſcheme of a diſpenſary ſeems to be unneceſſary, as there is hardly a phyſician or ſurgeon in this city who is not willing to give advice to the poor *gratis*; and the greater part of them give ſuch advice every day. Many phyſicians, together with their advice, give money to purchaſe the neceſſary medicines; and all the ſurgeon-apothecaries are daily in uſe of giving medicines to the poor *gratis*. To this may be added, that though, for reaſons which ſhall afterwards be mentioned, the Managers of the Infirmary do not allow of out patients as a part of the

the eſtabliſhment, yet they permit the phyſicians and ſurgeons in waiting to give advice, and to order medicines from the Infirmary-ſhop, to many poor perſons, whoſe caſe does not require, or whoſe ſituation will not permit, that they ſhould be taken into the hoſpital. By theſe ſeveral means, all the purpoſes of a diſpenſary are anſwered; and there ſeems to be no occaſion for loading the public with the expence of ſuch an eſtabliſhment.

2*dly*, The Managers are fully convinced, that the propoſed eſtabliſhment of a Diſpenſary will be hurtful to the intereſt, and obſtruct the utility, of the Royal Infirmary. They have good reaſon to know, that the ſick poor receive but little benefit from the advice and medicines given to them in their own houſes. They cannot take medicines in a proper manner in their cold and inconvenient habitations, and can very rarely be induced to obſerve the regimen which is often neceſſary for rendering their operation effectual; ſo that the only means of affording them relief, with any proſpect of ſucceſs, is, by taking them into a well-appointed hoſpital. But, though the patients in the Royal Infirmary have as great care and attention beſtowed upon them as in any hoſpital in Europe, it is well known, that, from miſtaken prejudices, many indigent perſons are extremely averſe to go into this hoſ-

pital ; and not a few of the poor in this city, rather than apply for admiſſion, languiſh long uſeleſs, or become a burden to the public, or die under ailments, from which they might have been relieved in the hoſpital. Experience long ago convinced the managers, that the allowance of out-patients, (which was permitted at the firſt inſtitution of the Royal Infirmary), greatly encouraged this averſion ; and, for that reaſon, the Managers found it neceſſary to aboliſh this practice. It is obvious, that the inſtitution of a Diſpenſary, as now propoſed, muſt have the ſame pernicious effects. The poor cannot be ſenſible of the imperfection of the practice carried on by means of a Diſpenſary, but will truſt to it ſo far as to prevent their applying to the Hoſpital, in which, perhaps, they can only receive effectual relief. Of this the phyſicians and ſurgeons, who give advice to the poor, are ſo ſenſible, that they have daily occaſion to recommend to them the entering into the Infirmary, as the moſt proper means of receiving effectual relief. Thus they are very inſtrumental in promoting the humane purpoſes of the Royal Infirmary, and in diffuſing its beneficial effects. But this cannot be expected from the phyſician, whoſe private intereſt is dependent on the number of patients who reſort to himſelf.

3*dly*,

3*dly*, As the propoſed eſtabliſhment of a Diſpenſary is intended to furniſh the means of giving a clinical lecture, it muſt, in that way, prove hurtful to the Royal Infirmary. The clinical lecture there, as far as the Managers know, is the only one given at ſuch length, and upon ſuch an extenſive plan, in any hoſpital in Europe; and it is well known, that it has contributed greatly to render medical education in this Univerſity more complete than in any ſchool of medicine, and, at the ſame time, has tended to increaſe conſiderably the funds of the Hoſpital. The managers have reaſon to believe, that a clinical lecture cannot be given to any good purpoſe but in an hoſpital, as it is only there, that patients in acute diſeaſes, with which it is moſt neceſſary that ſtudents ſhould be acquainted, can be properly ſubjected to their examination. But further, in the clinical ward of the Infirmary, not only patients in acute diſeaſes, but thoſe labouring under chronical diſorders, are admitted; and every perſon capable of judging knows, that chronic caſes cannot be properly treated or ſtudied, unleſs the phyſician has an opportunity of ſeeing the patients daily, and of conſtantly watching over the conduct both of their medicines and their regimen.

Though the Managers are, for theſe reaſons, clearly of opinion, that the clinical lectures in an

an hoſpital muſt have great advantages over thoſe given any where elſe ; yet, they apprehend, that ſtudents may not always be fully aware of this ; and that, by various means, they may be ſo miſled, as to encourage clinical lectures out of the Infirmary, which may be of detriment, both to medical education in the Univerſity, and tend to diminiſh the funds of the Infirmary ; a charitable foundation, from which, not only this city, but the kingdom, has derived ſuch benefit, that they have thought it highly worthy of their countenance and ſupport.

The Managers recommend to their clerk to have a copy of this minute publiſhed in the ſeveral news-papers of this city, as ſoon as conveniently can be done.

(Signed) ALEX. WOOD, PRESES.

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*Part of a Letter from Dr Duncan which appeared in the Caledonian Mercury of the 26th of May, and which was ſubjoined to his Propoſal for eſtabliſhing a Diſpenſary at Edinburgh, and his Letter on that ſubject to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary.*

"OF the above propoſal and letter, I leave every reader to form an opinion for himſelf. Had I all the inclination in the world

world to enter into controverſy, I have not at preſent leiſure for it. It is, however, my intention ſeriouſly to conſider every circumſtance that has been thrown out reſpecting this ſcheme; and, by the beginning or middle of June, I ſhall probably take what I reckon the moſt proper method of ſubmitting my ſentiments to the public, on the ſubject of eſtabliſhing a Diſpenſary at Edinburgh.

"Meanwhile, give me leave only to obſerve, that it is very far from being my intereſt to have, as patients at a Diſpenſary, thoſe for whoſe caſes admiſſion into an hoſpital is moſt neceſſary. On the contrary, ſince I began to give lectures on the caſes of patients labouring under chronical diſeaſes, I have had occaſion to adviſe a greater number of the poor to apply for admiſſion into the Infirmary, within the ſpace of a few months, than for ſeveral years before. I hope I have committed no crime in having been the means of beſtowing, during the courſe of the winter, on perſons in indigent circumſtances, ſubjected to diſeaſes which, in my opinion, rendered them improper objects for admiſſion into an hoſpital, about fifty pounds Sterling. With this, it is true, my private intereſt has been connected; but I have never once heard it inſinuated, that what I have already done, and what I may perhaps be able to continue without public aid,

aid, has been productive of the ſmalleſt diſadvantage to the Infirmary. Should future experience ſhew, that even a private Diſpenſary has the effect of hurting that Hoſpital, I ſhall not heſitate one moment in ſacrificing my own intereſt to the public good; but, while I have facts to demonſtrate the contrary, no one, I imagine, will expect, that an employment which has been, and may be attended with ſome profit to myſelf, ſhould be relinquiſhed on any opinion, however reſpectable."

OBSER-

# OBSERVATIONS

## *On a Propoſal for eſtabliſhing a Public Diſpenſary at Edinburgh.*

SOME months have now elapſed ſince I put into the hands of ſeveral of my friends, and of ſome other reſpectable citizens, a Propoſal for eſtabliſhing at Edinburgh a Public Diſpenſary for the relief of the poor when ſubjected to chronical or tedious diſeaſes. Soon after this propoſal had been thus circulated, an advertiſement appeared in all the news-papers of this city, extracted from the minutes of the Royal Infirmary, in which the Managers of that hoſpital endeavoured to ſhow, that, if ſuch a ſcheme were carried into execution, it would be detrimental to the charity under their charge.

That ſuch authority will have great weight in determining the ſentiments of the public, can admit of no doubt. When, therefore, one who may be ſuppoſed to be intereſted in the ſucceſs of

of ſuch a ſcheme, is to attempt to anſwer theſe objections, he muſt enter on a difficult taſk, with peculiar diſadvantages. I truſt, however, that no veneration for opinion will altogether preclude a candid inquiry. And, after the moſt ſerious and attentive conſideration, I cannot ſee the force of any one argument that has been urged againſt this inſtitution. While, on the other hand, not reaſoning only, but experience alſo affords me every day the moſt convincing evidence, that many advantages would reſult from ſuch an eſtabliſhment at Edinburgh. Hence, although I have a very high reſpect for almoſt every manager of the Royal Infirmary, yet, I truſt that I need offer no apology for ſubmitting my opinion to the examination of thoſe who may conſider a ſubject, which propoſes for its object the good of the community, as not unworthy of their attention.

Circumſtances might perhaps be mentioned which would leſſen ſomewhat, in the public eſtimation, the reſpect which otherwiſe would be paid to the opinion of the managers of the Royal Infirmary. Even the wiſeſt and beſt of men are not entirely without paſſion and prejudice. And it is hard to ſay how far, even thoſe of the greateſt diſcernment, may be miſled by various circumſtances. I am, however, firmly perſuaded, that the cauſe which I mean to ſupport, requires

quires no adventitious aid; and I earneſtly wiſh to avoid every circumſtance which can be conſtrued into a reflection upon the conduct of any man. Yet, conſcious of the integrity of my intentions, I may ſpeak with freedom, and I hope I ſhall be able to act with firmneſs.

I may farther obſerve, that it is not by argument alone that the preſent queſtion will be finally determined; even without public aid, I may, perhaps, be able to give ſuch a trial to this ſcheme as will afford proof of its real tendency. And, notwithſtanding the oppoſition which has been made, I have aſſurances of, at leaſt, ſome aid. I am, indeed, ſenſible, that the public attack which has been made upon this charity, is not the greateſt difficulty which it has now to encounter. Among the number of my moſt intimate friends, there are ſome, who, although they approve of the undertaking, are ſubjected to ſuch reſtraints, that they cannot ſupport it, without running greater riſks than I could either deſire or wiſh; many others, I doubt not, may be in the ſame ſituation, of the motives of whoſe indifference I ſhall ever remain ignorant. When, however, I appeal to future experience, I refer my cauſe to the determination of a judge, the equity of whoſe deciſion no one can deny. And when I ſolicit aid for this purpoſe, it ought to be remembered, that the effect of oppoſition will be, not to prevent a trial,

but merely to render that trial leſs convincing to the public, and more expenſive to an individual.

When I deſire only to be fully ſatisfied of the tendency of this ſcheme, by a proper trial, and when I again repeat a declaration which I have already made, that, if it ſhall be found, by experience, to be prejudicial to the intereſt of the Infirmary, it is my determined reſolution to relinquiſh it, I cannot allow myſelf to imagine, that thoſe, whoſe oppoſition proceeds from no other motive but the fear of its being detrimental to that charity, will be averſe to ſuch a trial. On the contrary, I am even led to hope, that they too will be deſirous of forming a judgment on the ſure baſis of experience; and, if a trial ſhall convince them of the utility of this ſcheme, that their influence will hereafter be exerted to make reparation for the injury they may have already done it. When a queſtion is agitated in which the good of the community is concerned, and when that queſtion may be determined by facts, which can neither be concealed nor miſrepreſented, thoſe whoſe opinions are the moſt oppoſite, if they be actuated by the intereſt of the public, will mutually deſire to be guided by experience.

Such conſiderations, joined to the moſt firm conviction of the utility of the inſtitution which I have propoſed, have determined me to ſtrain every

every nerve in order to obtain that evidence which experience alone can afford. And when I now venture to lay my ſentiments reſpecting this matter before the public, it is in the hope, that every one will ſoon have an opportunity of judging on the moſt unequivocal proof, how far they are well founded. If, therefore, I can now render it probable, that the eſtabliſhment of a public Diſpenſary at Edinburgh would be productive of many valuable effects, I may reaſonably hope that there are ſome who will be deſirous of giving countenance and ſupport to that trial which I ſo anxiouſly wiſh for. With this view, I ſhall briefly ſtate the effects which I imagine this inſtitution will have with reſpect to the Royal Infirmary, to the medical college, and to the indigent, when ſubjected to diſeaſe. Theſe will naturally include the moſt full anſwers which I am capable of giving to the objections which have been made to ſuch a charity; and in a queſtion which, I hope, is to be decided by future facts, I ſhall reckon it unneceſſary to enter into minute detail.

But, before I deliver my ſentiments on any of theſe ſubjects, I muſt beg leave briefly to mention the different occurrences by which I was induced firſt to propoſe ſuch an undertaking. After I had delivered lectures at Edinburgh for the ſpace of five years, as a private teacher, I was appointed

appointed by the Town-council to teach the Inſtitutions of medicine in the Univerſity; and, although I entered upon this important taſk under many diſadvantages, yet I had the moſt flattering and convincing teſtimonies, that my labours were not unacceptable to my hearers. In that ſtation, I was alſo invited by the Managers of the Royal Infirmary to take a ſhare of the clinical lectures at that hoſpital. And, in that branch of medical education, of all others the moſt important and moſt difficult, my exertions gave a higher degree of ſatisfaction than I could reaſonably have expected. When, therefore, after my appointment in the univerſity was terminated, I again reſumed the employment of a private teacher, ſeveral of thoſe who had formerly been my pupils at the Infirmary, were deſirous of hearing, from me, lectures on the caſes of patients whoſe diſeaſes were of ſuch a nature, that they could not with propriety be admitted into an hoſpital. And it was obſerved, that, among the ſtudents attending theſe lectures, ſuch a ſum might be collected, as would defray the expence of ſupplying with medicines people in indigent circumſtances, who were ſubjected to ſuch diſeaſes.

I was not ignorant, that, on the clinical lectures which are given at the Royal Infirmary, no

no inconſiderable part of the funds of that charity depended. But it never once entered into my imagination, that lectures on ſuch caſes could be conſidered as having the ſmalleſt degree of interference with thoſe delivered at the Royal Infirmary. To this propoſal, therefore, I had no other objection, than that which aroſe from the ſuppoſition that there were not many objects of charity who would be willing to avail themſelves of the advantages which practice in this manner might afford. I conſented, however, to make the trial. And I was ſoon convinced, that the opinion which I had formed was very erroneous. In a very ſhort time, ſeldom a week paſſed, during which I did not admit upon my liſt twice the number of patients that were requiſite for my lectures. The ſum, however, which I had collected from the ſtudents, in name of medicine-money, enabled me, without any expence to myſelf, to ſupply the neceſſities even of thoſe whoſe caſes I had no occaſion to employ as the ſubject of lecture.

This inſtitution was ſoon ſo much known among thoſe who ſtood in need of that aid which it was capable of affording, that applications became numerous. Among theſe there were many whoſe caſes I conſidered as ill ſuited to ſuch practice. To them I ſeriouſly recommended it to apply for aid at the Infirmary, as imagining that

that it was by confinement only, and by regular medical attendance under that confinement, that they could obtain effectual relief. The cafes of many others were fuch, that, unlefs for the fake of experiment, no practitioner could think of admitting them into an hofpital. For the relief of patients afflicted with difeafes of this nature, I employed the utmoft attention which I was capable of beftowing ; and I had foon the fatisfaction of feeing my exertions, in many cafes, crowned with fuccefs. This, from the regular records which have been kept of my practice, I have no doubt of demonftrating to the conviction of every candid practitioner.

Thus fatisfied, from facts, that there were numbers of individuals in circumftances of great indigence, for the relief of whofe calamities a charity of this kind was well fuited, and who, from fuch an inftitution, could receive effectual aid, I firft conceived the idea of attempting to put it on a footing more permanent, and more extenfively ufeful, than it could be while it depended entirely on one individual. But, before entering upon a tranfaction of fuch importance, I was refolved to be directed by the beft advice I could obtain from thofe in whofe judgment I could rely, and who were not in a fituation which would lay them under any reftraint in delivering their fentiments with freedom. One of

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the firſt to whom I had occaſion to communicate it, was a medical gentleman, equally diſtinguiſhed for activity in his profeſſion, and for humanity and attention in relieving the indigent. He not only approved of the ſcheme, but propoſed that it ſhould be conjoined with another charitable eſtabliſhment which he conſidered as wanting at this place. From different conſiderations, however, all thoughts of the propoſed addition were ſoon laid aſide; and, confining myſelf entirely to the original idea, I committed to writing a ſhort ſketch of this ſcheme, nearly in the ſame ſtate in which it afterwards appeared as a propoſal for eſtabliſhing at Edinburgh a public Diſpenſary for the relief of the poor, when ſubjected to chronical or tedious diſeaſes.

This propoſal I put into the hands of ſeveral friends, requeſting their candid opinion after due conſideration. At the ſame time, I informed them, that, while I wiſhed to be guided by the judgment I ſhould be able to collect from them, I was deſirous that my intention ſhould never go farther than the circle of my friends, if, in their judgment, it ſhould be reckoned either improper or inexpedient. The opinions I received were various. Two queſtions naturally preſented themſelves to conſideration; how far the ſcheme itſelf was a good one? and, ſuppoſing it to be ſuch,

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how far it was adviſeable for me to make the attempt to carry it into execution?

The general utility of the ſcheme was ſuppoſed to depend on the effect it would have with regard to thoſe who were the immediate objects of it, and on the influence which it might have on other uſeful charities. While ſome were clear in their opinions that it would be a charity of extenſive utility, and not prejudicial to any uſeful inſtitution already eſtabliſhed, others entertained doubts, and propoſed alterations. Theſe ſuggeſtions I committed to writing; I beſtowed on them the moſt ſerious conſideration; I was ſoon ſatisfied, in my own mind, that, whatever wore the appearance of objection, admitted of the moſt ſatisfactory anſwer; and I adopted ſeveral of the alterations which were propoſed.

But if, among the number of my friends, ſome entertained doubts reſpecting the utility of the ſcheme, there were many more who candidly delivered it as their opinion that the attempt would be prejudicial to myſelf. They admitted, that, if it could be carried into execution without oppoſition, it might be of material ſervice to me as a private teacher, ſince it would afford me a foundation for lectures, which, as being of the utmoſt utility to ſtudents, would not fail to be well attended, provided they were executed in a manner

manner that ſhould give ſatisfaction. But they added, that the public profeſſors in the univerſity, like every other incorporated body, who have the leaſt ſhadow of claim to monopoly, had ever been jealous of private teachers. They obſerved, that my lectures, in particular, were ſo diſpleaſing to ſome of them, that I had met with oppoſition, which no other teacher had ever before to combat. They concluded, that this oppoſition would now exert its utmoſt influence; and that, notwithſtanding the utility of the ſcheme, ſuch ingenuity would be exerted in raiſing probable objections to it, that I ſhould be effectually cut off from all aid in attempting to carry it into execution. Hence, while its real tendency could never be known, an attempt, in itſelf laudible and meriting public thanks, might not only be the ſource of groundleſs clamour and popular odium, but might alſo create oppoſition to me among worthy and diſintereſted men, who would otherwiſe conſider it as their duty to give aid and ſupport to induſtry and virtue. I ſaw the force of theſe objections; yet, convinced of the uſeful tendency of my propoſal, and perſuaded, that, on the footing on which I was to put it, the oppoſition of any man, or of any body of men, could never prevent a trial, I at laſt determined on an appeal to future facts.

Truſting, therefore, that the oppoſition which proceeded from miſtaken views, would ſoon either ceaſe, or even become the ſource of my chief ſupport; and that, if oppoſition proceeded from any other origin, it would, in a ſhort time, either loſe its influence, or counteract its intention, I printed the propoſal, and diſtributed it among thoſe from whom I thought there was ſome chance of obtaining aid. While, however, I truſt my cauſe to future experience, I yet reckon it neceſſary to mention, in a public manner, the anſwers I have given in private to the objections that have been made to it, and briefly to ſtate my ſentiments reſpecting the influence which it will have on the intereſt of the community at large.

The great ſource of oſtenſible objection to this ſcheme, has been the ſuppoſition that it will be hurtful to the Royal Infirmary. It is ſaid, that a Diſpenſary at Edinburgh will obſtruct the uſefulneſs of the Infirmary: That, were the poor provided with any other inſtitution for relieving their diſtreſs, ſuch is the prejudice they entertain againſt the hoſpital, that they would no longer think of applying to it for relief. And, as a convincing proof of this, we are told, that the Managers of the Infirmary were obliged to aboliſh the inſtitution of giving aid to out-patients at the Infirmary,

mary, from the pernicious influence which it had in this way.

This argument, however ſpecious, is far from being ſolid. That there is no regular eſtabliſhment of out-patients at the Royal Infirmary, is true. But it is very difficult to underſtand how the abuſe of this inſtitution could ever have led to its being aboliſhed, without ſuppoſing very great inattention on the part of thoſe who were then phyſicians to the hoſpital. They were under no obligation of treating, as out-patients, thoſe whoſe caſes required confinement in the hoſpital. And, while there remained a ſingle vacancy in the hoſpital, is it to be ſuppoſed, that any one patient, whoſe diſeaſe was of this nature, would receive medicines as an out-patient? Beſides, this argument evidently proceeds upon the ſuppoſition, that every patient may be benefited by admiſſion into an hoſpital. No one, however, can be often preſent in the waiting-room of the Infirmary, without hearing a contrary doctrine inculcated. There patients are every day told, that the nature of their diſeaſe is ſuch, as renders it improper for them to be admitted; and that, in place of receiving relief in the hoſpital, they would be injured by it. If, then, there be caſes of this nature, can we ſuppoſe that an inſtitution for the relief of ſuch patients

tients was abolished, because those who were then physicians to the hospital allowed it to be abused? For they certainly had it in their power to have restrained it within proper bounds. But, perhaps, without much difficulty, we may assign another, and a better reason, for abolishing an allowance for out-patients at the Royal Infirmary. Certain it is, that the funds of that hospital, which are now, I believe, greater than they ever were before, are, at present, annually expended in affording aid to in-patients. And it is also certain, that those whose cases require confinement to an hospital, are the greatest objects of charity. The Managers, therefore, whether intentionally or not, have unquestionably consulted the interest of the indigent, in not allowing any part of their funds to be appropriated to another purpose. Can this, therefore, afford an objection to a scheme which, without, in any degree, diminishing the revenue of the Royal Infirmary, will create a fund for the relief of those whose diseases are of such a nature, that they ought not to be admitted into an hospital? And a fund too, which would otherwise be carried from Edinburgh, and bestowed on medical education at other places.

From these considerations, then, I am firmly persuaded, that a dispensary, on the footing which has

has been propoſed, will in no degree obſtruct the utility of the Infirmary; but, I will even go farther, and I will venture to aſſert, that it muſt, to a very conſiderable degree, extend the benefits of that charitable inſtitution. This aſſertion I found, not merely on reaſoning, but on facts. It is but natural to imagine, that thoſe whoſe caſes required confinement, upon applying for aid at a diſpenſary, intended ſolely for chronical affections, would there be told, that it was neceſſary for them to apply for admiſſion into an hoſpital. And indeed, the intereſt of the inſtitution itſelf, would make it abſolutely neceſſary, that they ſhould not be treated at the diſpenſary. Unleſs, therefore, we were to ſuppoſe the phyſician at that charity totally void of humanity, we may conclude, that he would point out to thoſe whom he could not relieve, the place where that relief was to be had. And this would unqueſtionably be the beſt reaſon he could aſſign for not taking them under his own care.

Such reaſoning I have often, of late, had occaſion to employ. Since I began to give medicines, *gratis*, to thoſe afflicted with chronical diſeaſes, many have applied to me, whoſe caſes, in my opinion, required confinement to an hoſpital. To all theſe I have ſeriouſly recommended it, to apply for admiſſion into the Royal Infirmary.

firmary. And I have, at the ſame time, refuſed to admit them to the benefits of the Diſpenſary. Although my advice has not been followed in every inſtance, yet it has in many. Had I not been acting as phyſician to a diſpenſary, theſe patients would probably never have applied either to me, or to any other regular practitioner. Thus, then, by means of this inſtitution, I have had it in my power to extend the benefits of the Infirmary to ſeveral, who probably would otherwiſe have died of their ailments. And, if the very beginning of a Diſpenſary has been productive of ſuch conſequences, may we not conclude, that the continuance of it will, to a much higher degree, be attended with the ſame happy effects?

Although, however, it thus appears, that a Diſpenſary at Edinburgh muſt extend the uſefulneſs of the Infirmary, yet it may be imagined that it will have a tendency to diminiſh its revenue. And it has been ſaid, that, as the purpoſed eſtabliſhment of a Diſpenſary is intended to furniſh the means of giving a clinical lecture, it muſt neceſſarily have that effect.

That the clinical lectures in the Infirmary have formerly been attended by a greater number of ſtudents than of late, is an undoubted truth; and that they may fall to a ſtill lower ebb, is not impoſſible. Without heſitation, I may venture to aſſert,

aſſert, that theſe lectures might eaſily be put upon a footing more uſeful to the ſtudents, and of courſe more advantageous to the hoſpital, than they have been for theſe three years paſt. And I mean not to conceal that, during the period I have mentioned, I have myſelf delivered the greateſt part of them.

At a ſeminary of medical education, the attendance given to clinical lectures will always be, in ſome meaſure, proportioned to the inſtruction which ſtudents derive from them. Of all the different kinds of medical lectures, there is, perhaps, no one which can be more eaſily taught than clinical lectures. It is hardly poſſible to conceive any man, capable of practiſing medicine, who is not, at the ſame time, capable of ſaying ſomething with regard to that practice. Yet it does not follow that, from ſuch remarks, ſtudents will receive much information. And, to teach this branch of medical education with all the advantages to the ſtudents of which it is capable, requires higher abilities in a profeſſor, and muſt engroſs a greater proportion of his time, than is neceſſary for any other. But, beſides long experience, great diſcernment, and much attention, clinical lectures require alſo a peculiar talent, which few poſſeſs. Hence it is, that ſome of the moſt eminent profeſſors at Edinburgh, who were liſtened to by the ſtudents with the higheſt admiration when they taught other branches of medicine, have

have by no means given equal ſatisfaction when they delivered clinical lectures. Any fluctuation, therefore, to which the clinical lectures at the Infirmary may hereafter be ſubjected, may naturally be referred to the ſame cauſe, which has already produced ſimilar effects.

That the number of ſtudents attending the clinical lectures at the Royal Infirmary may be increaſed, if lectures of a ſimilar nature are given at a Diſpenſary, and that it never can be diminiſhed from this cauſe, are propoſitions which, I imagine, may be demonſtrated, in the moſt convincing manner, by a very few obſervations.

Let us, for a moment, ſuppoſe, that the patients to be treated at the Diſpenſary, laboured under the ſame diſeaſes with thoſe who are admitted into the Infirmary. Even in this caſe, the lectures, I apprehend, would rather aid than hurt each other. A clinical courſe, in one very eſſential particular, differs from every other. In other branches, the ſame lectures are repeated every year. But a clinical lecturer, if he diſcharges his duty properly, will never have it in his power to deliver the ſame lecture oftener than once. Attendance on one teacher, therefore, can no more be a bar to hearing another, than attendance on anatomy or botany can ſuperſede attendance on the practice of medicine. On the contrary, if one clinical courſe ſhall demonſtrate

monſtrate the utility of lectures of that nature, it will neceſſarily be an inducement for them to attend another.

But, beſides that no two clinical courſes in the ſame hoſpital can agree with each other, the lectures given on the caſes of patients who are admitted into the Infirmary, muſt be ſtill more different from lectures on the caſes of thoſe who attend the Diſpenſary. The only patients who can be admitted to receive the benefits of the Edinburgh Diſpenſary, are thoſe whoſe diſeaſes are of ſuch a nature, that either they do not require admiſſion into an hoſpital, or that they would be hurt by it. In the Infirmary, on the other hand, by much the moſt important caſes, and eſpecially thoſe chiefly ſelected as the ſubject of clinical lectures, are of ſuch a nature, that they cannot be the ſubject of treatment at the Diſpenſary. And, is it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that, becauſe any gentleman has had an opportunity of hearing lectures on the caſes of patients who labour under hypochondriacal affections, ſtomachic ailments, conſumptions, or the like, he will, on that account, be leſs deſirous of hearing lectures on the caſes of thoſe who are ſubjected to fevers, inflammations, or ſimilar affections? If, therefore, the clinical lectures at the Infirmary ſhould fail, that failure muſt unqueſtionably be aſcribed to ſome other cauſe than to lectures being given on

the cafes of patients at a Diſpenſary. But, if ſtudents think that they reap benefit from the obſervations that are there offered on ſome diſeaſes, it will unqueſtionably be a ſtrong motive with them to receive inſtruction, in a ſimilar manner, reſpecting others, which cannot be the ſubjects of Diſpenſary practice. When, therefore, it is conſidered, that, beſides a great variety of chronical diſeaſes, it is at the Infirmary alone that lectures can be given on acute affections, it muſt be evident, that caſe-lectures at the Diſpenſary cannot diminiſh, but may increaſe the number of ſtudents attending the lectures given at the Infirmary.

From ſuch conſiderations, I am perſuaded, that a public Diſpenſary at Edinburgh, in place of obſtructing the utility, and diminiſhing the funds of the Infirmary, would, in a ſhort time, have no inconſiderable influence, both in diffuſing the benefits of it, and in augmenting its revenue. But, beſides this, a Diſpenſary for chronical diſeaſes at Edinburgh would be ſtill further ſerviceable to the Royal Infirmary, by allowing the funds of that uſeful charity to be ſtrictly appropriated to thoſe purpoſes for which they are moſt neceſſary. While there are ſome diſeaſes which could not fail to be aggravated by admiſſion into an hoſpital, there are others, for which treatment in ſuch a ſituation unqueſtionably is not requiſite. In as far as

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ſuch caſes are admitted into an hoſpital, it muſt lead to a conſiderable expence of funds, which might be more uſefully employed. No one, who is acquainted with hoſpital-practice, can be ignorant, that the bane of every hoſpital is its being crouded with chronical caſes. The expence of maintaining patients ſubjected to theſe, muſt be great, as the cure muſt be tedious. And, ſince the cure of ſuch affections could be proſecuted with equal ſucceſs while the patients continued to lodge at their own habitations, and, in ſome meaſure, to proſecute their uſual employments, an eſtabliſhment for the relief of thoſe in ſuch a ſituation might tend very conſiderably to diminiſh the expence of the Royal Infirmary. Without ſuch an eſtabliſhment, however, urgent applications for admiſſion into the Royal Infirmary, from thoſe who are in ſuch a ſituation, can hardly be refuſed. And thus the public are obliged to pay, not merely for the medicines, but for the maintenance alſo, of ſome who make uſe of the hoſpital, not as a means of getting rid of diſeaſe, but as a refuge from labour. Thus, a Diſpenſary for the induſtrious poor, when ſubjected to chronical diſeaſes, would often be the means of preventing the funds of the Infirmary from falling a prey to lazy impoſtors.

Having thus endeavoured to ſtate the effects which a Diſpenſary would have on the Royal Infirmary, let us next conſider its tendency

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with reſpect to Edinburgh as a ſeminary of medical education. In this point of view, it will, I apprehend, appear, that a Diſpenſary, while it can be attended with no bad effect, muſt be of ſome ſervice, and may poſſibly be productive even of the moſt beneficial conſequences.

With this view, let us briefly conſider the effect which theſe lectures may be ſuppoſed to have with reſpect both to the teacher and to his hearers. That a private teacher of medicine would derive many advantages from being furniſhed with an opportunity of delivering ſuch practical lectures as this inſtitution would afford, is not improbable. If, therefore, it be imagined, that the advantages which any place enjoys, as a ſchool of medical education, are ſtrictly in proportion to the gain of public profeſſors, and that every fee which is drawn by a private teacher would otherwiſe have entered their pockets, this inſtitution might be ſuppoſed to have a bad effect. It is, however, hardly poſſible to conceive any propoſitions which have leſs foundation in truth.

The advantages which may be derived from private lectures have appeared to be ſo great, to the founders and patrons of two of the moſt eminent medical univerſities at preſent in Europe, that they meet with countenance and ſupport. At Vienna and at Goettingen, while the utmoſt pains is beſtowed in procuring public profeſſors

feſſors of the higheſt eminence, the greateſt encouragement is alſo given to private teachers. And theſe univerſities are at preſent frequented by a greater number of medical ſtudents than any on the continent of Europe. Were it not from enjoying the benefits of private teaching at Paris, no ſtudent of medicine would ever think of proſecuting his ſtudies at that place, after finiſhing his education at Edinburgh. From facts, therefore, we may infer, that this encouragement is at leaſt attended with no bad effect.

But, we may even go farther. That private teaching, in general, may be of ſervice, that it is particularly ſerviceable in medicine, muſt, at once, appear from even the moſt ſlight conſideration. If the ſucceſs of a private teacher be ever found to diminiſh the concourſe of ſtudents attending a public profeſſor, it can proceed only from great inferiority in that profeſſor himſelf. While the former muſt have many difficulties to encounter, the latter teaches with every advantage. If, therefore, we ſuppoſe him to poſſeſs even a very ſmall ſhare of merit, he can never be deſerted. But even admitting his abilities to be the higheſt imaginable, and his attention to be the moſt unwearied, yet his exertions can never render the labour of others totally ſuperfluous. Private teaching takes away from the ſtudent no opportunity of acquiring information which he before poſſeſſed. It affords him an opportunity of

of hearing queſtions, which, although doubtful and difficult, are yet of the higheſt importance, ſtated in different points of view. And, in a ſcience perplexed with ſo many intricacies as occur in medicine, this is eſſentially neceſſary. Hence it is, that thoſe who wiſh to practice medicine with ſafety to others, or credit to themſelves, will never reſt ſatisfied with the opinions of any one teacher. Were there eminent private teachers of medicine at Edinburgh, it would furniſh them with an opportunity of acquiring, at this place, that information which they muſt otherwiſe ſeek elſewhere. And this might be the means of protracting their ſtay at Edinburgh, to the emolument of the citizens in general. In this way, my lectures have already had ſome effect. For there are gentlemen now attending my courſe, who, had not theſe lectures been given, would have left Edinburgh at the end of the winter-ſeſſion.

But, if a private teacher may be the means of detaining ſtudents at Edinburgh, ſo he may alſo be the cauſe of their reſorting to this place for medical education. If he never acquire eminence, it will be the ſame thing to the city as if he never taught. But, if his fame and reputation as a phyſician and as a lecturer, be extended over this and other countries, the benefits to be derived from ſtudying under him will be an additional motive with ſtudents to give Edinburgh

burgh the preference to other ſchools of medicine. While the object of ſtudents is the acquiring uſeful knowledge, it will never once enter into their conſideration, whether a teacher read his lectures within the precincts of the college, or without them. To them it would be ſufficient, that, at Edinburgh, they have an opportunity of hearing him.

Thus, then, ſhould the profeſſor, to whom he is more immediately a rival, be even a ſufferer, the public will yet be benefited. If the public profeſſor be a man of ſingular abilities, the labours of a private teacher may yet be the means of ſecuring diligence, and of calling forth exertions which otherwiſe would never appear. But if, on the contrary, from miſinformation, or from leſs excuſable motives, an important truſt in the univerſity ſhall ever be committed to a man whoſe abilities are unequal to the taſk, the eminence of a private teacher may effectually prevent the bad conſequences of ſuch an appointment. And, were ſuch an error to be ever committed with reſpect to that branch of medical education, which muſt be the baſis of all future inquiry, private teaching is the only poſſible means by which the ſchool of medicine, which now flouriſhes ſo much, to the honour and emolument of this city, could be preſerved from ruin.

If, then, theſe be the natural conſequences of private teaching at this place, ſhould it be reckoned

oned unworthy of encouragement? But, if private medical lectures in general may be productive of advantages, the intereſt of Edinburgh, as a ſchool of medicine, will be particularly promoted by thoſe lectures, for which the Diſpenſary affords a foundation. It is allowed by all who are in the leaſt degree acquainted with the advantages which may be derived from clinical or caſe lectures, that it is impoſſible to conceive any mode of education better calculated for conveying uſeful knowledge. If ſo much benefit may be derived from lecturing on thoſe diſeaſes which may with propriety be admitted into an hoſpital, it is difficult to conceive any good reaſon why the caſes of thoſe patients, whoſe diſeaſes are of ſuch a nature, that it would be cruelty to admit them into an hoſpital, ſhould not alſo be the ſubject of lectures. And, if no public profeſſor at Edinburgh gives lectures on ſuch caſes, muſt it not tend to the advantage of ſtudents, that they have an opportunity of hearing them from another quarter? There can, however, be no diſpute, that, whatever contributes to the improvement of ſtudents, is conducive to the future intereſt of the univerſity.

But, if the real intereſt of the Royal Infirmary, and proper views of thoſe principles on which the reputation of Edinburgh, as a ſchool of medicine, is to be extended and ſupported, afford arguments

arguments for the eſtabliſhment of a Diſpenſary, the relief of thoſe oppreſſed by indigence and diſeaſe, furniſhes reaſons which will operate ſtill more powerfully, as inducing the charitable and humane to give countenance and ſupport to ſuch an inſtitution.

It has indeed been alledged, that if a Diſpenſary were eſtabliſhed at Edinburgh, it could be but of little uſe. Of all the objections which have been made to ſuch an inſtitution, this, to me, appears to be the moſt extraordinary. The experience which I have already had furniſhes me with inconteſtible proof that a Diſpenſary will be of very great uſe. While I can already appeal to fact, I eſteem ſpeculative reaſoning unneceſſary. But, on this ſubject, even reaſoning alone, although no facts could yet be adduced, muſt, I think, afford conviction to every reader.

There are ſome, indeed, who contend, that medicine is a ſcience from which no advantage can ever be derived. With ſuch I mean not to reaſon. But, taking it for granted, that the bountiful Author of our nature has ſupplied us with powerful agents, which, when properly uſed, are capable of removing and alleviating many of thoſe diſeaſes to which the human frame is ſubjected, the utility of ſuch an inſtitution can never be diſputed. And that, in many diſeaſes, medicines may be ordered with judgment, be exhibited

hibited with attention, and be followed by happy effects when they are given to the poor at their own habitations, muſt be ſelf-evident propoſitions to every one who does not altogether deny the power of medicine.

Does the ſkill of a practitioner depend on his giving his advice at any particular ſpot? Or, will the children of an indigent tradeſman, the whole produce of whoſe labour is but barely ſufficient to ſupport a numerous family, enjoying health; will theſe, when ſubjected to diſeaſe, be attended to with leſs care by a feeling mother than by a hireling nurſe?

I am far, however, from meaning to aſſert that the giving advice and medicine to the poor at their own habitations, is a mode of practice without imperfections. I admit that the coldneſs of their habitations may ſometimes be a very great inconvenience; although heat is by no means eſſential to the cure of all diſeaſes. But, in what ſituation is the practice of medicine without imperfection? The aſſertions of the Managers of the Infirmary reſpecting the practice which muſt be carried on at a Diſpenſary, gives me a juſt claim to compare it with that which is carried on in every hoſpital. It would be no difficult matter for me to prove, that this likewiſe is ſubjected to imperfections, and theſe by no means inconſiderable, which human prudence can ne-

ver

er remove. But ſuch a diſcuſſion would be as oreign to my purpoſe, as it was out of place in the Ianagers of the Infirmary to hold forth to the public re imperfections of practice at a Diſpenſary, which : ſolely to be confined to the relief of patients /ho neither can, nor ought to be admitted into an oſpital.

But the uſefulneſs of a Diſpenſary is, I appre-end, evinced beyond all doubt, by the argu-ients which the Managers of the Infirmary have rrought to prove that it is unneceſſary. That a harity for the relief of thoſe who ought not to e admitted into an hoſpital, ſhould be ſuperflu-us, becauſe the Infirmary receives ſupernume-ary patients, is an aſſertion which requires no nſwer. But, beſides ſupernumerary patients, it true that advice, and, on ſome occaſions, me-icines alſo, from the ſhop of the Infirmary, are gi-en gratis to thoſe whoſe complaints do not re-uire, and whoſe ſituation will not permit that ey ſhould be taken into the hoſpital. We are ld, however, in another part of the minute, at the annual expence of the Infirmary has metimes exceeded its annual revenue. Does ot the continuance, then, of a permiſſion to ve ſome medicines gratis from the ſhop of the ifirmary, after a regular eſtabliſhment for out-tients has been aboliſhed, demonſtrate, in the oſt convincing manner, that they find it incon-

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ſiſtent with humanity to remove entirely the aid which may thus be afforded, but is confined ſolely to thoſe whoſe wretchedneſs and penury are obvious, and others, although better cloth-ed, may be in equal diſtreſs?

It is indeed true, that the humanity of the phyſicians and ſurgeons, who are practitioners in Edinburgh, by giving advice at their own houſes, and by accompanying that advice, either with medicines or with money, is a means of relieving the diſtreſs of numbers to whom the benefits of the Infirmary cannot be extended. That their benevolence affords the moſt eſſen-tial aid to the poor, is unqueſtionable. But, will the indigent be deprived of this, becauſe a public charity of the ſame nature is eſtabliſhed? The objects which require this aid are nume-rous. And, after a Diſpenſary is eſtabliſhed, the humanity of private practitioners will ſtill have an ample field for acting. Numbers would have recourſe to ſuch a charity, who, if it were not eſtabliſhed, would otherwiſe expend the money which is requiſite for obtaining food and raiment to thoſe of their family, who continue to enjoy the bleſſing of health, in purchaſing medicines at laboratories. And every one whoſe humanity induces him to be a ſubſcriber to the Diſpenſary, will have a title, for a very ſmall con-ſideration

ſideration on his own part, to demand that aid for the indigent, which he would otherwiſe be obliged to ſolicit as a favour.

The expence with which the public would be loaded by the eſtabliſhment of a Diſpenſary, is with little propriety urged as an objection againſt it. This charity is not propoſed to be founded on any tax, but on the voluntary donations of thoſe who will receive pleaſure from relieving the diſtreſs of the indigent. And the utmoſt ſum which would be required from them, when compared with the expence of other charities, is very inconſiderable. For it is to be remembered, that the annual expence of this inſtitution is to be defrayed by money obtained from thoſe who attend it as pupils, from the hope of receiving adequate returns for what they pay. And ſtudents of medicine, in conſequence of deriving inſtruction from Diſpenſary practice, will be induced to ſupport an uſeful charity at Edinburgh, with money which otherwiſe they would expend on their education elſewhere. All the money which is ſolicited from the benevolent, is propoſed to be employed in erecting a commodious building for the purpoſes of this charity. Such a building might be executed, with every convenience, for the ſum of five hundred pounds. And, while it would ſecure permanence to this charity, it would,

would, at the ſame time, be the means of extending its utility, and would continue in perpetuity to be the property of the public.

But the advantages which would reſult from furniſhing the indigent with medicines, when ſubjected to ſuch diſeaſes as either do not require admiſſion into an hoſpital, or would be hurt by it, is not more manifeſt, than it is obvious, that this is a charity which, of all others, is the leaſt liable to abuſe. Medicines, even in their moſt ſimple ſtate, when in ſingle doſes, are not a commodity which can be diſpoſed of by any but thoſe whoſe profeſſion it is to ſell drugs: And, when medicines are compounded together, they can be of uſe to no one but the individual for whoſe complaints they are particularly calculated. But, even ſuppoſing it poſſible that the medicines given in charity at a Diſpenſary could be ſold to advantage by impoſtors who might ſometimes receive them, yet they would certainly find purchaſers only among thoſe on whom it would be charity to beſtow ſuch medicines, had they applied for them. For what other motive, but extreme indigence, could ever induce any one to purchaſe at ſuch hands? I muſt own, therefore, that it ſurpriſed me to find, that any man of diſcernment ſhould have ever drawn an objection to a Diſpenſary from ſuch a

ſource.

ſource. It is hardly poſſible to conceive any charity whatever to which ſuch objections may not be urged with better reaſon.

But, in place of leaving the deciſion of this queſtion reſpecting the utility of a Diſpenſary at Edinburgh to argument alone, let us have recourſe to facts. Facts are here ſupplied, in the conſequences which have reſulted from Diſpenſaries at other places, and in thoſe which have already flowed from ſuch an inſtitution at this place.

The Public Diſpenſary of London has been the means of relieving thouſands from wretchedneſs and miſery. The Weſtminſter Diſpenſary has been productive of the ſame happy effects. And the advantages reſulting from a ſimilar inſtitution in Dublin, have been ſo clearly demonſtrated, that it has been repeatedly aided by grants of money even from the legiſlature of that kingdom.

Theſe inſtitutions, all of which are but of recent date, will naturally lead to the eſtabliſhment of diſpenſaries in other places. A propoſal is accordingly printed for eſtabliſhing a Diſpenſary at Kelſo. And this ſcheme meets with approbation and ſupport from inhabitants in that neighbourhood, diſtinguiſhed by high rank in life, by judicious diſcernment of the real intereſt of their country, and by humane attention to the relief of the indigent. A ſubſcription is alſo begun for eſtabliſhing a Diſ-

penſary

penſary at Newcaſtle. It deſerves to be remarked, that it is oppoſed by ſome, whoſe private intereſt is connected with the Infirmary at that place. But that this oppoſition proceeds ſolely from the jarring intereſt of the medical practitioners, can admit of no diſpute. For there the phyſicians of the Infirmary neither pretend to deny the uſefulneſs of a Diſpenſary, nor to repreſent it as pernicious. They have attempted to thwart the ſcheme, by ſetting on foot a ſubſcription for a ſecond Diſpenſary, to be conjoined with the Infirmary. Notwithſtanding what has been ſaid by the managers of the Edinburgh Infirmary, I ſhould not be ſurpriſed to find a ſimilar conjunction adopted at this place. And I am convinced, that, although it were adopted, it would neither render the Diſpenſary which I have propoſed an uſeleſs, nor a ſuperfluous inſtitution.

At other places where Diſpenſaries are eſtabliſhed, they are ſupported by annual ſubſcription. But here a fund for defraying the annual expence of this charity may be obtained from a different ſource. Since the beginning of November laſt, I have collected ſeventy-ſix pounds Sterling, in name of medicine-money, from ſtudents who have attended my lectures on the caſes of patients, whoſe diſeaſes I thought to be of ſuch a nature, as to prevent their admiſſion into an hoſpital. Out of this fund, one hundred and

and twelve patients, whoſe narrow circumſtances could ill afford the expence of drugs when they were ſubjected to bodily diſtreſs, have been ſupplied with every medicine which, to the beſt of my judgment, could be uſeful, either in alleviating or removing their complaints. The caſe of each patient has been carefully taken down in writing, and entered into a regiſter at the time when they were admitted to the benefit of this charity. Reports are afterwards inſerted of the effects which reſult from the medicines employed. And hardly a week paſſes, in which I do not receive, in preſence of many ſtudents, ſincere thanks and fervent prayers for future ſucceſs, from thoſe whoſe diſeaſes, by the aid of divine providence, I have been the inſtrument of removing.

Among the number who have applied to me for aid, there have been ſeveral who were my patients in the Infirmary, and whom, after fruitleſs attempts for their relief, I diſmiſſed from that hoſpital, becauſe it was my opinion, that they would ſuffer from longer reſidence there. In more than one inſtance of this nature, I have had the ſatisfaction of doing material ſervice by my practice at the Diſpenſary. And, from experience, I can aſſert, that, while the practice of medicine, both in an hoſpital and at a Diſpenſary, is liable to imperfections of different kinds, yet, in

either way, it is beneficial to ſociety, and an ineſtimable bleſſing to the poor.

Influenced by ſuch conſiderations as I have now mentioned, I can neither be intimidated by oppoſition, nor do I deſpair of ſucceſs. Confident, that what I have here advanced will be demonſtrated by future experience, with patient ſilence, I ſhall wait the deciſion. And I truſt it will ſoon be the opinion of every diſintereſted man, that a Diſpenſary at Edinburgh for the relief of the poor ſubjected to chronical diſeaſes, is beneficial to the Royal Infirmary, ſerviceable to medical education, and highly uſeful to the indigent though induſtrious labourer.

I ſhould, however, conſider myſelf as wanting in duty to the public, did I not put it in the power of every generous and humane man, who wiſhes for the accompliſhment of theſe valuable ends, to lend his aid in promoting them. This conſideration then, induces me to make the following propoſal, to which, I muſt own, it is difficult for me to foreſee any good objection.

Let thoſe who ſhall become ſubſcribers to this inſtitution enjoy, from the time of paying their ſubſcription, all the privileges annexed to the rank of governors. But, in place of immediately beſtowing the money that ſhall be collected, in erecting any building, let that money be depoſited at intereſt, in ſome ſecure hand, for the

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ſpace of two years, from the beginning of December next. Let the intereſt only of the money thus collected be allowed for defraying ſome part of the expence of hiring rooms, and obtaining other articles neceſſary for the Diſpenſary. And, at the end of that period, let every contributor have it in his option to withdraw his original contribution.

By this plan, every ſubſcriber will have an opportunity of being fully ſatisfied of the real tendency of a Diſpenſary, before his money be employed in that way which is to render it a permanent inſtitution. And, after the repeated aſſurances which I have given in the moſt public manner, that, if this charity ſhall be found in any degree detrimental to the intereſt of the Royal Infirmary, I am determined to relinquiſh it, the real friends of that hoſpital can have nothing to dread. On the contrary, if my views be not miſtaken ones, there is ground for hoping, that it will prove beneficial to that charitable inſtitution. Ought they not, therefore, as well as me, even on the probability of ſuch an event, now to exert their endeavours for having it in their power to form an opinion on the only certain foundation?

With the view of demonſtrating, in the moſt convincing manner, the truth of every concluſion which I have here drawn, I have put into the hands of ſome of my friends, who are of opinion, that the

the ſcheme which I have propoſed, merits approbation and ſupport, ſubſcription-papers for a Diſpenſary, under the conditions which have been mentioned. If there be any others who wiſh to encourage ſuch an undertaking, or who are deſirous of giving aid to ſuch a trial as muſt afford conviction to every one reſpecting the real tendency of this ſcheme, they alſo ſhall be furniſhed with ſubſcription-papers. I ſhall make up an exact liſt of all thoſe who, by ſubſcribing their names to ſuch papers, or in any other manner, may ſignify to me their intention of contributing any ſum, not leſs than one guinea, for the ſupport of this undertaking. And, about the middle of November next, I ſhall take the liberty of ſummoning the firſt general annual meeting; leaving it afterwards to the contributors at large to regulate and ſuperintend this charity in whatever manner they ſhall reckon moſt conducive to the public good.

I now conclude theſe obſervations, by giving public aſſurance to every one who ſhall become a contributor to the Diſpenſary, that, in diſcharging the duties of phyſician to this charity, the moſt unwearied attention ſhall never be wanting from

their moſt humble ſervant,

ANDREW DUNCAN.